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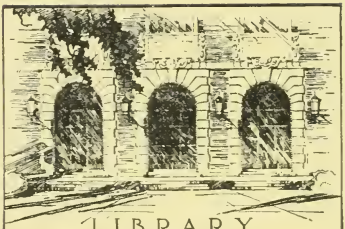

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6. G.

THE VICTIM OF INTOLERANCE;

OR, THE *HERMIT OF KILLARNEY.*

A Catholic Tale.

By ROBERT TORRENS,
Major in the Royal Marines.

" He was for ever beating himself against the bars of his cage; and such is the power of passion over reason, that neither the exercise of his penetrating and vigorous understanding, nor the experience of constant failures, were sufficient to prevent him from wasting his strength in an idle endeavour to pass the magic circle which law and custom had drawn around him."

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1814.

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TO

THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND,

WITH THE

HUMBLE THOUGH EARNEST HOPE,

THAT IT MAY BE PRODUCTIVE OF

LIBERALITY OF SENTIMENT

ON ONE HAND,

AND

MODERATION AND TRANQUILLITY

ON THE OTHER;

THIS FICTION IS INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE COUNTRYMAN,

THE AUTHOR.

26 Jan 54 Abbon
Jun Res Pay 24 Aug 53 Mon. h.

THE

VICTIM OF INTOLERANCE,

&c.

CHAP. I.

Killarney.

ROMANTIC scenery had always afforded me delight. After having visited Westmoreland and Cumberland, I proceeded (in the beginning of September) to the Lakes of Killarney, where I arrived without encountering an "hair-breadth 'scapes" or meeting an adventure sufficiently important to induce me to record "my travels' history." The mountains over which I had been slowly dragged were desolated. As I drove into the town, low

heavy clouds rested on the adjacent hills, obscuring the prospect, and giving an aspect of gloom to the spot which imagination had represented as the abode of beauty. Depressed by fatigue and disappointment, I retired to the inn, and

"Steeped my senses in forgetfulness."

The beams of the morning sun broke through the unclosed casements of my chamber, and awoke me from a sweetly tranquil slumber, which had renovated all the springs of life. I trod on air, I felt as if I could "bestride the lazy-pacing clouds;" as if, soaring from the earth, I could "repose upon the bosom of the air." The necessary arrangements being made, I proceeded towards the lakes with senses exquisitely alive. We rode to Ross-castle,

which is situated on an island connected with the main land by a small bridge. Here, after contemplating for a few minutes the beautiful expansion of water that stretched before us for many miles, we procured a boat and embarked upon the lake. Not a zephyr breathed on it; it was a liquid mirror reflecting the wooded isles scattered o'er its surface, and inverting the majestic mountains that rose perpendicularly from its banks, and towered to the clouds. I had never beheld such a scene. A mingled feeling of delight and awe absorbed me. I seemed like our first parents, to wake upon a world where every thing was astonishing, every thing was new.

We passed through picturesque rocks and isles beautifully wooded, until we arrived at Inis Fallen, an island supe-

rior to the others, both in size and in the loveliness of its landscape. Here we landed. The ground was beautifully varied. Hills of gentle ascent, in graceful, and almost imperceptible curves, sloping into vallies; the shore, now gently declining to kiss the surface of the lake, now jutting into capes, and exhibiting piles of rock; fields of vivid and luxuriant verdure gleaming between wood, clothed with the russet tinge of autumn, all contributed to bestow on this earthly paradise an enchantment and variety that never cloyed.

After we had taken some refreshment amid the ruins of an ancient abbey, we left this island, and launched once more upon the lake. We stretched toward the huge mountain of Glana. Its sides are clothed with hanging woods. The oak, the mountain-ash,

and the ever-green arbutus that seemed to draw nutrition from the naked rock, overhung the margin of the lake with indescribable magnificence; while, at a distance towards the summit of the mountain, the beams of the meridian sun, glancing on the rocks, and variegated foliage of the intermingled woods, were refracted into colours beyond expression beautiful. A richly embroidered carpeting seemed to overspread the mountain, and to fling its gold and purple tints on the eye of the astonished beholder. Thus a thousand optical deceptions heightened the enchantment of the scene. I dwelt in fairy land; all around me was so grand, so magnificent, so new, that my senses wandered, and I stood in a delightful trance, almost doubting the reality of what I saw.

While I continued in this waking

vision, our little bark was rowed past a point of land which is called the peninsula of Mucruss, and which runs out a considerable way into the waters, dividing them into the lower and middle lakes. And here my attention was irresistibly seized by the stupendous mountain of Turk, rising perpendicularly from the margin of the waters. As the boat approached I gazed in silent awe. A thrill of mingled terror and delight struck through my frame, while breathless, and motionless, I raised my eye to the tremendous mass that now frowned and nodded o'er my head, threatening to crush me into nothing. I turned from the contemplation of objects thus painfully sublime, and suffered my eye to dwell upon a beautiful cottage erected at the foot of the mountain. It formed a most agreeable contrast to the terrific grandeur of the surrounding scene; while,

as we rowed along its cultivated domain, a female figure glided with inexpressible grace before us, and seemed the guardian spirit of the lake, protecting us from the demons of the tempest that frowned upon the mountain's summit.

Towards the left rose Mangerton. Less regular in its outline than Glanaa, and less bold than Turk, this mountain, long supposed to be the highest in Ireland, exhibited an aspect of savage desolation. Huge masses of rock that "seemed not to belong to the earth, "and yet were on it," rested upon the sides of Mangerton; and, on its summit, was an unfathomable lake, formed in the crater of an exhausted volcano, and called *Poul-an-Iffrin*, or the *Hole of Hell.* But I was soon called to contemplate other scenes. We had now arrived at the entrance of a narrow and

winding passage, which I was told led to the Upper Lake. We all got out of the boat, which, thus lightened, was dragged up a rapid stream. In all its features this entrance is terribly sublime. It seems as if the omnipotent hand had rent the mountains asunder to make a passage for the waters. Immense masses of rock are thrown about in wild confusion, and hang rather than rest on the projecting precipices. Torrents dash from cliff to cliff, and with tremendous echoes reverberate along the mountains, whose ragged sides and over-hanging masses are rudely piled on either hand, and seem to touch the skies. There was something in the scene indescribably sublime, something that bowed the soul with an irresistible sentiment of awe and terror. Impressed with the magnificence, the vastness of creation, I felt my own littleness, my own un-

worthiness; and, bending with deep humiliation, exclaimed, "O God, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou regardest him?"

In the closet of the theorist, perhaps it may be possible to be an atheist; but he who can enter the magnificent temple of nature, and not feel conscious of the present deity, must be a man without a heart.

We now passed the strait, and a scene opened upon us where it was impossible to determine which was most predominant, the beautiful, or the sublime. On each side from the rocky shores of the lake rose mountains of stupendous magnitude; and in front, M'Gillicuddy's Reeks towered above the rest, stretching their giant arms to the ocean,

and lifting their heads into the skies. The whole had an aspect of savage desolation, of uncreated rudeness; while, in the centre of the waters, isles of heavenly beauty rose like harmonious worlds smiling amid surrounding chaos. Nothing could be more terribly sublime, more enchantingly lovely. Now I ventured to lift my eye to the terrific features of the mountain scene; and now I dwelt delighted on the Isles of Paradise, which seemed to float upon the liquid silver of the lake. As our boats wound slowly through them, they appeared to revolve in mystic order, varying the prospect to infinitude, and imparting to the beholder inexhaustible delight. But though the sense could not here be satiated, the declining sun lengthened the shadows of the mountains, and warned us to retire. As we approached the opening which leads

from the Upper Lake, a cannon was fired. Those who have only witnessed echoes in which the sound is repeated with a pause between, can form no adequate idea of the reverberations which were now produced. Peals of thunder travelled along the windings of the mountains, and, after dying away amid the distant caverns of M'Gillicuddy's Reeks, returned and burst with redoubled strength on the astonished ear. The sound was here, it was there, it was every where. It seemed as if the foundations of the earth were shaken as if the last trump had sounded. The boatmen, though familiar with the effect, in silent awe rested on their oars, and our little bark was swept by the rapidity of the current through the terrific chasm that winds into the Middle Lake. We passed the peninsula of Mucruss on the right; and being landed at

Ross Island, the point from which we first set out, I turned, for the present, from the contemplation of a scene which no language can describe, no pencil represent, and to heighten the beauty and sublimity of which, the most active imagination can combine no image.

From the many interesting objects which I had passed over almost unnoticed, I felt that one day was insufficient to see the beauties of Killarney. On the ensuing morning, therefore, I again proceeded to Ross Island, took a boat, and passing the peninsula of Mucruss, proceeded towards the Upper Lake. But as we rowed under the magnificent eminence of Turk, and approached the winding chasm of the mountains, the day became overcast, "and changing skies hung out their sable clouds." Every thing seemed to

indicate an approaching tempest. Low and heavy clouds floated in opposite directions through the troubled atmosphere. Gusts, sudden and impetuous, swept the surface of the lake, and lashed its waters into foam. The spirit of the storm paced the cloud capt mountains, and with giant hand rolled forward the accumulating vapour. The boatmen became alarmed, and giving up our intention of visiting the Upper Lake, we hastened to take shelter in Dynis Island.

From Dynis I passed by a bridge to an island called Brockeen, and from this by another bridge to Mucruss. Mr. Herbert, to whom it belongs, has displayed great taste in heightening the charms of the most beautiful domain in Europe. Mucruss, as I have already said, is a finely wooded peninsula, shooting far into the waters, and sepa-

rating the Lower from the Middle Lake. As I wandered through its woods and sloping lawns, the scene now smiled with unequalled loveliness, now frowned in awful grandeur. The woods, the waters, and their sylvan isles blended in delicious harmony, while the huge mountains that on each hand towered to the skies, seemed impassable bulwarks thrown up by the Creator to fence this second Eden.

As I passed the house of Mr. Herbert, my attention was attracted by the ruins of an ancient abbey, which rose amid a grove of venerable ash. I hastened to explore this monument of other times; and surely there never was a scene better calculated to inspire melancholy thought, and to bring home to the senses man's transitory state. The massive arch tottered to its fall; the

lofty tower scattered its ruins in the dust. A yew tree grew in the area of the cloisters, and proudly flourishing amid the general decay, flung its funeral shadows on the scene. On every side mouldering and shattered coffins were piled around; human bones occupied the place where the altar once had stood; human sculls peeped through the rending walls, and with ghastly and horrid frowns seemed to interdict me from this abode of death.

Oppressed with an almost superstitious melancholy I ascended by a flight of winding steps, to what had once been the inhabited apartments of the abbey. This part of the building was a perfect ruin. Ivy clothed the roofless walls; ashlings, wafted from the adjoining grove, grew in the mould which ages had deposited on the arches that had formed the

chamber floors. In one place, where the mould was of considerable depth, I observed the marks of cultivation; and my guide informed me that that had been the garden of a hermit who lately inhabited the Abbey. I expressed my surprise that any one who had not "put off this mortal coil," should choose to reside in the mansions of ruin and of death; when my guide, seeing my curiosity powerfully excited, led me into an apartment more entire than the rest, and, pointing to a chasm in the wall, exclaimed, "In that spot the hermit slept; a mouldering coffin was his bed, a human scull his pillow."

I received this intelligence with an incredulous and inattentive ear, similar to what I lent to some superstitious stories which the boatmen had told me concerning the ghost of O'Donohough

the Great, and the howlings of infernal spirits heard from the Devil's Island. But my guide repeated his assertions with such confidence and circumstantial details, that I yielded him a portion of belief, and consented to walk to a village about two miles distant, where, as he affirmed, a cloud of witnesses would confirm the account he had given of the Hermit of Mucruss.

All that my conductor told me was true. On my arrival at the village, and afterwards at Killarney, all whom I conversed with on the subject corroborated his report, and from a person more intelligent than the rest I collected the following account of this eccentric solitaire.

"Some years ago it was discovered that an unknown person had taken up his

residence in the ruins of Mucruss Abbey. His sudden and unaccountable appearance, together with his austere and unsocial habits, excited no common degree of curiosity and alarm, and the vulgar believed that the Abbey was inhabited by something supernatural. Indeed the appearance and mode of life of this extraordinary man, were calculated to infuse a visionary awe into minds less prone to superstition than those of the common Irish. His figure was spectarian ; though his sunken eyes shot forth animation, the tinge of death was on his cheek, and the loose covering which he wore appeared a sack-cloth shroud. The sound of mirth was hateful to his ear, and the cheerful face of nature offensive to his eye. As if he belonged not to this world he kept aloof from man, and seemed to delight in every thing that human nature hates.

When the tempest howled along the savage mountains of the Upper Lake, and the troubled waters dashed upon a thousand rocks, and roared in terrific echoes from ten thousand caves, then would he launch his little skiff upon the wave, and commune with the invisible agents of the elemental strife. When impervious mists rested on the mountains, excluding every star, and giving to the night a double darkness; then, under the influence of a power that seemed more than human, he would leave the coffin where he slept, find his way up the desolated sides of Mangerton, and hover on the verge of *Poul-an-Iffrin.*

"But though inverted customs lent him savage joy," the Hermit of Mucruss, severe only to himself, was when necessity or accident brought him into society, kind and humane to all. With the pro-

duce of his garden he made charitable donations. When the tempest of winter deterred the fishermen from pursuing their occupation, he has launched his little skiff, and procured a supply of fish for the poor. But while he relieved the wants of his fellow creatures he studiously avoided their society. When asked for the produce of his garden, without uttering a word, or even directing his eye to the person who addressed him, he pointed to that part of the garden where it might be obtained. When he was successful in taking fish he divided them into lots, and left them upon the beach, in order that the poor might supply their wants without breaking in upon his solitude. On these occasions it was astonishing with what equity and moderation the common people availed themselves of the bounty of the eccentric hermit. Superstitious awe restrained

their rapacity, and fearful of offending the super-human being that mitigated his distress, each took what his immediate wants required, but took no more: to have carried off any thing, in order to make money of it, would have been considered, not only as a robbery perpetrated on the poor, but as an act of sacrilege which no one had sufficient hardihood to commit.

"The Hermit of Mucruss possessed a calm intrepidity of spirit which nothing could appal, and an expansion of understanding, which, when contrasted with his mode of life, was truly wonderful. On one occasion these endowments were exerted in a manner peculiarly beneficial to others and honourable to himself. Some gentlemen belonging to a party in this country which arrogates to itself exclusive loyalty, assembled in

Killarney to celebrate the anniversary of the triumph of the Prince of Orange. As this triumph had been obtained over the Catholics, and had rendered them outcasts in their native land, the public celebration of it, even in the most decorous manner, could not fail to wound their feelings, and rekindle all the passions called into action by the civil war. But the gentlemen alluded to, in their furious loyalty forgot decorum, disregarded the feelings of their fellow citizens, and trampled on the laws of that constitution, the establishment of which they pretended to commemorate. They sallied forth heated with wine, wearing orange lilies in their hats, and bawling out their party tunes. This conduct was highly offensive to the inhabitants of Killarney, who are chiefly Catholic, and the Orangemen were hissed and hooted at, as they passed along the

streets. Opposition rendered them more violent, and they assaulted a man who expressed disapprobation at their proceedings. They were now assaulted in their turn, and, overpowered by numbers, were on the point of being massacred. The magistrates interposed without effect, the military called out to quell the riot were driven back to their quarters before they had time to form. At this critical moment the Hermit appeared. He rushed into the midst of the infuriated mob, and partly by the awe which his presence inspired, partly by the display of a bold and popular eloquence which captivated his astonished hearers, assuaged their wrath, and prevailed on them to retire to their respective homes. The Orangemen, now freed from jeopardy, gathered round their deliverer, and thanked him for his interference; but he silenced them with

a look of scorn, and turning indignantly away, left them under one of the most uneasy and humiliating feelings of our nature, the consciousness of being despised by the person to whom we owe obligation.

" To the well attested facts connected with the character and mode of life of this extraordinary man ignorant credulity added a thousand fictitious tales. He was supposed to hold communication with the departed spirits of the Irish chiefs, and to be gifted with knowledge and power more than human. At length the solitude which he loved was so frequently interrupted by impertinent curiosity, and absurd applications for the discovery of stolen property and the relief of incurable distempers, that about a twelvemonth ago he suddenly disappeared from the neighbourhood:

whence he came no one knows, and where he has gone it is impossible to discover."

This story made a strong impression on my mind. In my hours of speculation I had been accustomed to consider human testimony as inadequate to establish the truth of any thing not conformable to experience; but I now found that there was some principle within me, which compelled me to yield credence to this extraordinary and somewhat miraculous narration, when supported by a number of concurring witnesses, who had no assignable motive to disguise the truth. I mused upon the extraordinary character, and still more extraordinary life of the Hermit; and instead of wrapping myself in the idle apathy of scepticism, I felt an unceasing curiosity to trace out the causes

which made him what he was. "There is no doubt," I exclaimed, soliloquizing upon the narration I had heard "that the Hermit of Mucruss laboured under a very peculiar species of mental derangement. But his was a derangement proceeding from moral causes, not from bodily disease. What then were the strange events which gave his ideas this eccentric bias? By what misfortunes, or what crimes, was a mind, which, even when in ruin, displayed such marks of benevolence and grandeur, struck from the great mass of society and driven to "flame lawless through the void?" Perhaps some account of his former life may be obtained, perhaps a person, who even in his dark and wildered state, possessed such intelligence and philanthropy, might, in his lucid moments, have reflected on the causes of his fall, and have left some record,

warning his fellow creatures of the rocks on which he had himself been ruined.

The tracing of moral causes had long been my favourite occupation; and my solicitude to ascertain the circumstances which had produced such uncommon effects on the mind of the Hermit, made me cherish the suggestion, that, previous to his quitting the neighbourhood of Mucruss, he might have left some history of himself. I determined to return to the Abbey, and amid its vaults and ruins to seek some relic which might lead to the gratification of my curiosity.

Having taken an early dinner at the inn where I put up, I gave a man whom I hired to accompany me some implements which I thought might be useful in aiding my search, and, mounting my

horse, proceeded towards Mucruss. On the road to this enchanting spot some magnificent prospects of the lake were opened. The sun shone full on the rocks and variegated woods of Glanaa, diffusing over them that beautiful, that magic colouring which had delighted and astonished me on the preceding day; while the mild and regular outline of this mountain formed a fine contrast to the towering magnificence of Turk, and the abrupt and savage ascent of Mangerton. My imagination was powerfully excited, and I began to personify all that I beheld. The tranquil expansion of the lake appeared the couch where beauty slept; the proudly swelling mountain the throne where power frowned, and at the illusions of my own fancy I alternately smiled and trembled.—"How inexplicable," I cried, "is the human mind, and how does the

inspiration of the poet differ from the delusions of the maniac: only perhaps in the circumstance of duration. After 'giving to airy nothing a local habitation and a name,' the poet can, at pleasure, descend from his ideal world—The ideas of the maniac are at all times so vivid, and so inseparably linked to each other, that the powers of external perception become permanently impaired, and the combinations of imagination are perpetually mistaken for realities. Yet if poetical inspiration differs from the delusion of the maniac only in duration, if the madman is habitually under the influence of that enthusiasm, which, at times, lifts the bard above this little world, and gives him transitory dreams of paradise, then instead of being an object of compassion, he is the happiest of mortals. But if madness is bliss, surely the Hermit was not mad." As I

thought of the Hermit my curiosity to know his history returned with all its ardour. I spurred my horse and soon arrived at Mucruss Abbey. The sun was now declining to the ocean, and his horizontal beams glanced through the arches of the ruin, and lengthened the shadows of its ivy-mantled towers. I paused for a moment in reverential awe, then entering by the great portal, ascended the stone steps to what had once been the inhabited apartments of the Abbey. Here with eager curiosity I explored the chamber of the Hermit, hoping to discover something which might lead to a knowledge of his history. The niche where his coffin-bed had stood underwent the strictest scrutiny. I examined every crevice, and endeavoured to remove every stone, conceiving that the Hermit might have searched round the ruins for a place in

which to deposit an intimation of who he was. But no aperture could be found. In this part of the ruin the cement, rivalling in hardness the stonework which it bound, convinced me that it had been undisturbed for ages. Disappointed, but not discouraged, I descended the stone steps, resolved to subject the rest of the building to a similar search. The cloisters, which were still sufficiently entire to preserve from immediate decay any thing which might have been concealed in them, had been a favourite haunt of the Hermit, and I determined to explore them, notwithstanding the remonstrances of my attendant, who could no longer conceal his fears at remaining so late in the Abbey. Indeed the scene, and the hour, were well calculated to appal the heart of any one, not fortified by philosophy against superstitious terrors. The sun

had set, and from the widely spreading yew-tree which filled up the area of the cloisters, and deepened the shades of doubtful twilight, "the moping owl did to the moon complain." But I knew no ghostly apprehensions, and while my attendant, afraid to advance, but still more afraid to be alone, followed trembling by my side, I here pursued a search as diligent and as fruitless as the former.

I now left the cloisters, and advancing towards the place where the great altar formerly stood, discovered on the south side of the Abbey, a vaulted chamber which was sunk considerably lower than the rest of the building. I descended into it with some difficulty, and struck a light in order to prosecute my search. The floor was strewed with human bones, and the decaying boards of shat-

tered coffins, and as I walked round this mansion of death, and breathed the putrescent vapours of decaying nature, a damp and numbing chilness palsied the springs of life, and gave a feeling of horror that can be known only to those who have visited such a place at such an hour. But my ardour, unabated by disappointment, to discover some relic of the Hermit, was a stimulus which overcame every debilitating sensation, and I continued to advance. At the farthest extremity of this part of the building my eye caught a marble slab which was fixed into the wall. I examined it. It covered the entrance into a tomb, and bore all the appearance of having been recently removed. I enquired of my attendant to whom the burying-place belonged, and the name of the person whose remains had here been lately committed to their kindred

earth. He informed me that the tomb belonged to an ancient Milesian family now nearly extinct, and that it had not been opened for upwards of twenty years. "This," said I, "is impossible; if no person has lately been buried here, the stone must have been removed from the mouth of the tomb for some other purpose."

"If it has been opened," faltered out my trembling companion, "it must have been by the spirits who nightly leave their graves to haunt the ruined Abbey."

"Whether," I returned with eager-"ness, it has been opened by the living or the dead, I will see what it contains." I applied my chissel to the yielding lime-work; my horror-struck guide crossing himself repeatedly, and putting

up petitions to the Virgin as I proceeded in my work. I loosened the stone, and rolled it from the entrance of the tomb. At this instant a gust of wind sighed along the walls of the ruin, a rustling noise was heard, the unhallowed night bird screamed, my terrified companion let the light fall from his hand, and while we were thus left in perfect darkness, clung around me in the convulsive agonies of fear.

How powerful is sympathy! and how much are our feelings and opinions influenced by those with whom we associate! Perhaps there never was a human being less superstitious than myself, yet when I felt the fear-palsied hand of my companion grasping mine, when I heard his knees smite against each other in a paroxysm of terror, my mind, by some strange contagion, caught his ideas and

sensations—I expected to see the spirits of the dead burst from the surrounding graves, and became as great a coward as himself.—I was no sooner conscious of this weakness than I was ashamed of it. Like a person who witnesses an optical deception, and knows that there is no reality in what he sees, my understanding discredited what my fancy feared. In a short time reason dissipated my delusions. The moon, passing from behind a cloud, and shedding a faint gleam through the broken arches of the Abbey, enabled me to discover the torch which my companion had extinguished. I again struck a light, and advanced to the tomb which I had opened. On the lid of a coffin I saw a roll of papers. I descended into the tomb, and seizing them in eager haste, read with inexpressible pleasure and surprize, the following words, which were written in large

letters on the cover of the manuscript. "Stranger, this is the history of the Hermit of Mucruss. Make it public, that men of all sects and persuasions, learning by a practical illustration the misery and the crimes of which injustice and intolerance are the parents, may henceforward practice equity, and act towards their fellow-subjects, as they would wish their fellow-subjects, in similar circumstances, should act towards them."

Having read these lines, I left the tomb and the abbey, and hurrying to my apartments, perused with eager avidity, the history of the Hermit. I now comply with the injunction inserted on the back of the manuscript, and lay it before the public. If it should fail to impress on the mind of the intolerant monopolist, the great Christian precept

contemplated by the writer, I trust that it may at least afford to the reader a degree of amusement and interest equal to that which it has afforded me.

CHAP. II.

The Hermit's Manuscript.

WHO can resist his fate, what mortal can reverse the immutable decrees of the Omnipotent? He who spreadeth out the heavens as it were a garment, and restrains the rapid comet in its course, with a special providence watches over the affairs of man.—Nay, a sparrow falls not to the ground without his knowledge; even the hairs of our head are numbered.—Then let us learn to bear our allotted evils, nor with unavailing folly struggle to avoid them.

My sufferings were foreshewn to me;

I saw beforehand the causes which were to drive me from the society of human beings, and for a great part of my life to render me the most miserable of mortals;—I endeavoured to escape, but circumstances over which I had no controul successively arose, and chained me down, until I had drank to the dregs my allotted cup of misery.

Educated a Catholic, the representative of a family, which for many ages had given to Ireland a succession of chiefs and heroes, and of a temper at once ambitious and compassionate, I was unable to contemplate with patience the degradation of my religion, and the sufferings of my country.—I had struggled ardently to distinguish myself in the world; but the remnant of the penal code, which was still in force, had blasted all my hopes, and left a sense of

injustice rankling at my heart.—Under these circumstances, while I found myself perpetually urged to take a part in political discussions, I felt that I was incapable of conducting them with that degree of temper and moderation which was necessary, not only to advance the cause of religious liberty, but to ensure my personal safety, and screen me from the suspicion and resentment of the Protestant government, which had taken alarm at the rising spirit of the Catholics.—I determined to leave Ireland.

At the time that I formed the resolution of withdrawing from my country I was engaged in some commercial speculations which I had undertaken for the sake of occupation and utility, rather than with the desire of accumulating wealth.—I hastened to dispose of my stock, and, leaving the commercial

town in which I had resided, set out for the family seat, in order that I might spend a few weeks with my mother and aged grandfather before I quitted Ireland.—As I came within sight of the haunts of my happy childhood, each object seemed to wear the aspect of a friend, and breathed around a pleasing melancholy that soothed the ranklings of disappointed hope, and silenced the cravings of unsatisfied ambition. As I stood pressed to the bosom of my mother, and my hand grasped in that of my aged grandfather, I felt a gleam of that pure felicity which had long been a stranger to my bosom. While upon the road it appeared that I had a thousand things to tell, a thousand enquiries to make; but now all was forgotten, and without having a thought to bestow on the future or the past, I sat silently conscious of my happiness, while the beings most

dear to me in this world gazed on me "with looks of cordial love."—The hour of rest now approached, and as we rose to separate for the night, I said, "my dear parents, I have been traversing the earth in unavailing search after that happiness which I might have found at home.—The voice of fame may intoxicate for a season, the contentions of ambition may excite our ardour, and call our powers into play; but it is the kind affections of the heart which give perfect complacency, and that calm felicity which never cloys."

I retired to my chamber enamoured of domestic pleasures, and, for the first time, musing on the vanity of those ambitious desires which had drawn me off from the enjoyments placed within my reach.—Early in the morning I rose, and ranged through the domain. My

brother I found had gone out before me, and was busily employed in ordering the labourers, and superintending the laying out of the grounds and gardens. As I saw the tinge of health upon his cheek, and his eye beaming with the chearful alacrity of a mind at peace, I exclaimed, "my brother, you have made the better choice: may you still retain your relish for the unsophisticated pleasures of the rural scene, and may the cravings after fame, and the restlessness of ambition, never disturb the serenity of your heart." I left him, and turning down a secluded walk to indulge my musings undisturbed, perceived my grandfather advancing towards me. His cordial salute I returned cordially: as in glowing terms he expressed his satisfaction at enjoying my society once more, my heart smote me for having long absented myself from him, and I

began to repent of the resolution I had taken of spending some years abroad. "In seeking reputation, and in pursuing projects of ambition, I have too frequently forgotten the parents to whom I owe so much.—I have not the sobriety of mind, the stable and well regulated affections of my brother, and while he, finding occupation and happiness in the retired obscurity of a country life, has relieved you from the fatiguing details of business, and been the prop and solace of your age, I have been a restless wanderer on the earth, useless to you, and a burthen to myself."

"My dearest boy," interrupted the partial old man, "though a more upright and affectionate heart than your brother's never issued from the forming hand of the Creator, yet in measuring your con-

duct by his, you act unjustly by yourself.—To fit us for the diversified affairs of human life, nature has given us different tempers, and different degrees of intellectual power.—While the great majority of mankind find sufficient occupation in the ordinary routine, and particular details of life, a few minds of the higher order are adapted to preside over unforeseen emergencies, and provide for the general good ; these cannot find a sufficient degree of interest and occupation in the amusements and business of a country life : weary of particular details, they grasp at general views ; stimulated by an ardent love of glory, they deviate from the beaten track, and climb the arduous steep until they gain the region in which nature meant that they should move.—Then, my son, repine not that your genius is not adapted for the peaceful pursuits of a country

gentleman.—You have hitherto been dissatisfied and restless, not because you panted after fame, and were actuated by a lofty ambition, but because the injurious institutions of society held you back from your proper destination.—For my own part, though I love your society much, I love your glory more: you were formed to restore the renown of your ancestry, to confer blessings on your country, and never, with my consent, shall you devote yourself to the improvement of our estate, or "to rock the cradle of declining age."

"My too partial and indulgent parent," I returned, "though nature should indeed have fitted me to restore the renown of my ancestors, and confer blessings on my country, yet the laws of the society in which I live, have marked out for me a sphere more humble. These

laws I cannot change; it therefore becomes me to accommodate my mind to my situation, nor suffer unavailing regrets to interfere with the duties which I am permitted to fulfil. Glory I cannot give you; my society is all that is left me to bestow. I will therefore part from you no more. Since I cannot render you happy by realizing the magnificent hopes which you formed of your child, I may at least remain with you, and, by affectionate sympathy, mitigate the sense of disappointment."

"Recollect," rejoined my grandfather, "that truth and justice plead upon our side; and that, though the cry of bigotry may for a season drown their voice, they must ultimately trample and sweep away those injurious restraints which withhold you from your proper destination. The period may not be very dis-

tant when the temple of the constitution will be opened to you; qualify yourself, therefore, by every possible means, for the important duties you will then have to perform; repair to foreign climes, view the human mind under the various aspects which different manners, and different stages of improvement cause it to assume; learn the laws, the interests, and the resources of the various countries through which you pass; visit the inspiring remains of antiquity, and in the haunts 'where at each step imagination burns' commune with the shades of the illustrious dead—then returning to your native land, fraught with knowledge, and glowing with the ardour of patriotic genius, realize the hopes which I have formed. I have other reasons, my son, for wishing you to leave Ireland for the present: had you not mentioned your journey,

when you did, I should myself have urged it.—If you wish to give peace to my declining days, and to relieve my heart from some dread forebodings, you will withdraw to the continent."

My grandfather was pertinacious in rejecting my proposal to remain with him, and in urging me to set out on my travels. A day was appointed for my departure, and after taking an affectionate and melancholy farewell of my best and earliest friends, I set out for Dublin with the intention of taking the packet to Holyhead.

My journey was tedious and melancholy.—When on former occasions I had parted from my first and dearest friends, the charms of novelty, or the ardour of hope, had diverted my mind from dwelling too intensely on sorrow-

ful recollections.—But now novelty had lost her charm, and hope no longer gleamed upon my prospect. I was flying from misery and injustice, not pursuing joy; I was going into voluntary exile, not as an ardent and young adventurer, whose sanguine imagination anticipates the hour, when crowned with success, he shall retrace his steps, and return to the land of his fathers; but as one who shrinking from the lash of unnecessary and oppressive laws, leaves his country and his home, to wander through the world idle and joyless, and uncertain of return. "When will the progress of truth and justice silence the advocates of intolerance and exclusion, and enable me to live in the land of my forefathers, with the immunities of a citizen?" Before that distant day arrives, how many changes may take place, how many ties which

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now bind me to my country may be broken by the hand of death?—These questions perpetually recurred to me as dragging "a lengthening chain" I pursued my journey.—A thousand apprehensions crowded on my mind. I fancied that my grandfather had appeared more feeble than usual, and imagined that I had perceived a degree of mysteriousness in his manner, and a solemn anguish in his last adieu. These reflections I indulged until I began to entertain the horrible idea that we should meet no more.—I would rest on the eminences of the dreary mountains, and look back towards the spot which was to me the attracting centre of the world; a thousand times I stopped, determined to return and live and die at home.—But the injunctions of my venerable parent recurred to me.—He had not detailed with his usual explicitness, his reasons

for wishing me to remove from Ireland for the present; but I knew his will, and, whatever the compliance might cost, I resolved to obey it. During the day I travelled the cheerless road towards the Irish metropolis; as night closed round I put up at a wretched inn, and retired to my chamber, not to sleep, but to muse upon my sorrows and disappointed hopes.

Early in the morning I arose and pursued my journey, the air had a soft and balmy freshness, that, breathing through my nerves, chased away the feverish oppression of a wakeful and uneasy night. The rising sun smiled upon a picturesque and cultivated scene; the dew glittered in his beams as it hung upon the bending herbage, and on the otherwise viewless lines which gossamer had drawn across the blue mists of morning.

The birds, fluttering from spray to spray, put forth their golden plumes, and chaunted on the cheerful gale the notes of gratitude and joy. From the sun-illumined hills, from the winding and shadowed vales, an indistinct sound came forth, which seemed to my visionary fancy the voice of nature saying to every thing that lives, " be free, be happy." Holy nature, I heard thy call, but the intolerance of man withheld me from obeying it. While all the beings around me occupied their proper stations, and moved in their appointed spheres, I, thrust from my place in society, injuriously excluded and restrained, had desires which I could not gratify, and powers that I was not permitted to exert. Panting to soar into the atmosphere of glory, I spread the wings of young ambition; I bounded from the earth to take an eagle's flight,

but my pinions were entangled and broken in the meshes of oppression. Ye enemies of religious fredom, ye monopolizers of the honors of the state, no longer outrage common sense, and insult the victims of your selfishness by the assertion that this is the land of toleration. Though you light not the fires of persecution, you insult and you degrade; though you leave not the body to languish in the prisons of inquisition, you fetter and confine man's better part. O give my frame to the torture, but let me acquire honor and renown; fix your fetters on my limbs, but suffer my genius to act without controul.

In this state of mental irritation I continued my journey to Dublin, and without meeting any adventure of importance reached that metropolis. The day

after my arrival I took a place in the packet for Holyhead, but just as the passengers were about to get on board, the weather, which for some time had been threatening and unsettled, became so tempestuous that the master of the vessel deemed it unsafe to put to sea. This accidental delay was productive of important consequences, and gave a colour to my future fate. Two days after I had left home, an express was sent after me with the intelligence, that by the death of a distant relative of my father's, a valuable estate had devolved on me. Had the packet sailed at the appointed time, I should have been in England, and probably on the continent, before the news of this unexpected event could have reached me. But my evil star presided at that hour, the messenger overtook me, and, on perusing

the letters, which he brought, I found I had some indispensable duties to perform before I could leave Dublin.

The person to whose estate I had become intitled was a younger son, and had been educated in the tenets of the Romish Church. As the family estate was entailed upon his eldest brother, and as his father, living in the style of ancient hospitality, evinced no intention of accumulating a fortune for younger children, James O'Mara came to the resolution of providing for himself in the manner pointed out by the laws then in force. These laws provided that the younger son of a Catholic could, on renouncing his religion, obtain the rights of primogeniture. James O'Mara therefore read his recantation, and obtained his brother's birthright.

After renouncing his faith and disregarding the ties of natural affection it was not to be expected that O'Mara would stop short in his career of crime. Indeed the laws, which in other countries are formed for the punishment and prevention of vice were in Ireland so constituted as to hold out rewards and bounties for the perpetration of villany and fraud. By the laws of discovery it was enacted that the lands of the Catholics should be forfeited to the first protestant informer. Therefore before my infamous relative changed his religion, he wound himself into the secrets of the several branches of the family, in order that he might ascertain where their property lay, and whether it was so circumstanced as to come within the laws of discovery. This necessary information being obtained, the apostate became an informer, and by a process of

legalized robbery stript his friends and relations of their estates.

The wealth thus infamously obtained, was as infamously employed. The apostate now became the oppressor of the poor, and the seducer of innocence. At length satiated and disgusted with the lawless pleasures of roving libertinism, he attached himself to a young person whom he accidentally met, in a public rendezvous of vice: she was the daughter of a gentleman, and had been educated in all the accomplishments suitable to her rank. But being pursued with unrelenting severity for having made one false step, she abandoned her father's house, determined to work for her bread, and endure, amongst strangers, all the severities of fate, rather than bear the perpetual reproaches of those who called themselves her friends.

Wandering wretched and unknown, without money, or a place to lay her head, this victim of faithless love was found by one of the panders of infamy and indeed professionally vicious. Just at the commencement of her career my profligate cousin met her. In the first instance he was attracted by a new farce. But, observing the elegance of her manners, and becoming acquainted with her while her countenance yet retained the infantine expression of innocence, and before "nature's blush by custom was wiped off," even his callous heart was touched, and a sentiment of compassion mingled with his selfish pleasures. He called upon her again and again, and finding an increasing charm in her conversation, first took lodgings for her in Dublin, and afterwards brought her home to his own house.

Catherine Harwood, for so the mistress of my libertine cousin was called, had seen and felt so much degradation and misery while she had been the property of the public, that she was fully awake to the comparative respectability and happiness of living under the protection of an individual. In order to make the most of her good fortune she preserved an inviolable fidelity to her paramour, and studied and complied with all his humours. She studiously endeavoured to make herself useful; habit rendered her necessary to his comforts, and at length, by becoming the mother of his children she bound herself to him by indissoluble ties.

Though profligate and vicious my relation was not consummately depraved: as his children clung round his knees, and

in endearing accents, lisped his name, the bonds of natural affection wound round his heart, and he began to feel that he had not been created for himself alone: as his daughters grew up smiling in all the charms of innocence and beauty, he recollected that his vicious courses had brought them into the world without a place in society and without a name. All the atonement that was now in his power to make he made. His estates not being under any settlement or entail, he signed a will in favour of his illegitimate children, gave them all the advantages of education which his fortune could afford, and, after many struggles with his pride, married their mother.

In the estimation of the world wealth has usurped the privilege of charity and covers a multitude of sins. O'Mara

and his new-made bride were now received into society, and all their former deviations from rectitude seemed to be buried in oblivion. But though the splendid routs of his wife were attended by many ladies of rank, and his excellent wines, like Lethean waters rendered his companions forgetful of his infamy, still his bosom harboured a less obsequious guest, that reminded him of his plundered relatives and defrauded brother, and perpetually whispered that it was the wealth and not the man that was respected. But if amid the bustle and the pleasures of the world conscience would make "her still small voice be heard," in the hours of solitude and sickness she spoke in thunder to his guilty soul. The vicious excesses in which he indulged had heightened, to an alarming degree, the symptoms of an hereditary gout. The unfixed dis-

order alternately threatened his stomach and his head, and the physicians pronounced his life to be in danger. All the errors of his youth now rose in frightful review before him, and he hastened to make his peace with heaven ere he should be summoned to his last account. Though he read his recantation in order to get possession of his brother's property, yet he had never been sincerely a protestant, and now that he trembled on the verge of eternity he returned into the bosom of the Catholic Church, and had her last solemn sacraments administered.

These religious ceremonies having in some degree calmed the terrors of his guilty conscience, O'Mara turned his thoughts to the arranging of his temporal affairs. He destroyed his former will, and after providing for the payment of

his debts, and bequeathing some legacies to charitable purposes, divided his property among his children more equally than before. While this will was drawing up the symptoms of my cousin's distemper became more alarming, and scarcely had he affixed his signature to the paper when he sunk backward and expired.

So suddenly had my cousin been summoned from this world that it never occurred to him to take the oath of allegiance, or to go through any legal process, that might evade the law which provides that the will of a relapsed papist shall be void, and his property pass to the next heir in the same manner as if he had died intestate. By this oversight his children, who were all illegitimate, were left without any provision, and I, being heir at law, by the

death of his brother without issue, became possessed of his estates.

Thus those intolerant laws by which I had long been fettered and oppressed brought me a great and unexpected accession of wealth. But the passion of avarice my breast had never harboured, and even if this increase of fortune had come to me in a manner conformable to the principles of natural equity, it would have been a poor compensation for the loss of fame. But coming to me as it did, through the means of apostacy, treachery and iniquitous statutes, that held out a bounty for the commission of the most detestable crimes, I felt that it would be inconsistent with honor to retain it. I therefore regarded it as a sacred deposit placed in my hands for the purpose of being restored with all convenient speed to its proper owners.

How the generality of the world would think and act under such circumstances I shall not stop to enquire. For myself I can only say that in this affair I had no temptation to pursue a line of conduct different from that which my sense of equity prescribed. Already possessed of as much wealth as I desired, and smarting under, and detesting the remnant of that iniquitous code from which my present increase of fortune was derived, I felt a secret pride in counteracting its injustice, and in rendering, as far as my power extended, the state of property such as it would have been had the laws of discovery never disgraced my country. I therefore sought out the persons whom O'Mara, on becoming a protestant, and an informer, had stripped of their property, determining to restore to every one that which in equity I conceived to

be his. The remainder of the estate I proposed to distribute in the manner in which it would have gone, if my cousin, by professing on his death-bed that mode of faith which he believed to be true, had not rendered his testament invalid.

These inquiries and arrangements necessarily detained me some time in Dublin. Our intolerant laws, even in those extraordinary cases when it might appear that I was benefited by their operation, impeded my steps, and withheld me from escaping the dangers that environed me. Had the laws of discovery never disgraced my unhappy country, or had a perfect emancipation of the Catholics enabled persons relapsing into the Catholic Religion to bequeath their property like other subjects, then I should have pursued my journey un-

interrupted, and have reached the continent before those events occurred which were now to plunge me in ceaseless sorrow and irretrievable disgrace. But it was fated otherwise, and it is now my business to tell what I am, not to explain what, under other circumstances, I might have been.

CHAP. III.

One morning, while sauntering about the streets of Dublin, in anxious expectation of being soon able to arrange my business, and comply with my grandfather's injunction (which, since I left home, had been frequently repeated by letter) of leaving Ireland for the present, I was accosted by a schoolfellow. His name was O'Neil; and as, while boys, an intimate friendship had existed between us, our joy at this unexpected meeting was mutual and extreme. Space and time seemed to have passed away, while, in memory's delightful dream,

we visited the school and the playground, and lived over our youth again. Each had a thousand things to communicate, a thousand things to hear; and in order to avoid the noise and interruption of the street we retired to a neighbouring hotel.

Here I related to O'Neil the principal occurrences of my life, and explained to him how every scene I had passed through since we parted, verified an observation which he then made, that while the Protestants monopolize the power and honours of the state, the Catholics will, in every walk of life, be withheld from running an equal race with their fellow subjects.—O'Neil in return, narrated a brief history of himself. "After I left school," said my friend, "I entered the University of Dublin.—I passed through my college

course with some eclat; and, after having taken my degrees, went to the Temple.—Here my regular habits, persevering industry, and retentive memory enabled me to surpass, in legal knowledge, several of my contemporaries, whose brilliant parts had excited much higher expectations.—After the usual course of studies, I was called to the bar.—I had not those graces of elocution, and that flow of eloquence, which could lift me at once into notice, but I gradually acquired the reputation of a sound lawyer, and got into extensive practice.

"While at college, I formed an attachment for a young lady of a very amiable disposition, and of connections highly respectable. I had some reason to believe that my affection was returned, but her fortune was slender—I had

mine to seek.—Fearful, therefore, of hurting her establishment in life, by entangling her in an engagement to a person who might never be enabled to become hers, I silenced my feelings, and withheld myself from making a declaration. Yet as the period approached when I was to leave Ireland, for the purpose of entering myself at the Temple, the conflict between affection and a sense of propriety rendered me evidently disturbed; and, on parting with my beloved Mary Ann, I could not refrain from adverting to the happiness of those, who, born to independence, were free to obey the impulse of their heart.—The amiable girl appeared to comprehend my feelings; and, pressing my hand, cast on me a sweetly melancholy smile, which seemed to say 'be successful for my sake.'

"In the sentiment I entertained for Mary Ann, there was more of approbation and esteem, than of that romantic ardour which is supposed to be the characteristic of an early attachment.—Though her person was engaging, it was her mind that won me.—Every thing she said and did was marked with the most perfect propriety: chearfulness was her bosom friend, and discretion never forsook her side.—Often while I gazed on the lustre of her dark expressive eye, dwelt upon the carnation that mantled on her cheek, or pursued the graceful curvings of her neck, some glance of intelligence, some expression fraught with reflection and good sense, has rendered me forgetful of her personal charms, and suggested reflections on the rational happiness which would fall to the lot of him, who should obtain her

for a companion, and on the order and regularity that would reign in the family, of which she should be the mistress.

"Though the species of love with which Mary Ann inspired me, may appear too calm and unempassioned, to persons of warmer fancies, and nerves more exquisitely alive, it was better placed, and of a less changeful character, than the generality of attachments formed at an age, when feeling and imagination are supposed to outrun the judgment.—The sweetly affectionate smile which she bestowed on me at parting, lived in my memory while I visited new scenes, and mingled with new acquaintance.—Her image, ever present, was the guardian spirit that observed my conduct, and withheld me from the destructive paths, into which

my companions deviated.—The hope of being one day enabled to call her mine, overcame the allurements of pleasure and of sloth, and stimulated me to that persevering application, which in the profession I had chosen, was necessary to success.

"On my return from the Temple, I found Mary Ann still disengaged; her person, now fully formed, was more beautiful than ever, and her conversation evinced that her natural good sense had been improved by assiduous culture.—During my absence she had often enquired for me; and I learned that the good reports, which from time to time were made of me, had given her a degree of satisfaction that she was unable to conceal. She had declined some advantageous proposals; and from the good opinion we are prone to entertain

of ourselves, and our propensity to believe what we wish, I began to conjecture (and afterwards found my conjecture was correct) that Mary Ann had waited to ascertain whether the preference I had shewn her while at college, would continue when my success in the world (which those who knew me began to predict) should enable me to obey my inclination.—Gratitude swelled at my breast, and rendered indelible the impression which her beauty and accomplishments had made.—I applied to my profession with redoubled ardour, and the instant my increasing reputation at the bar enabled me to support Mary Ann in the sphere which she had been accustomed to move in, I offered her my hand.—The proposal was accepted, we were married.—Our intimate union and perfect knowledge of each other, circumstances which too frequently consti-

tute the grave of love, served but to heighten our mutual esteem.—We have lived together with the most perfect harmony, and now three lovely children, by binding our hearts to a common centre, draw us, as it were, closer to each other.—I believe it possible that a person of warmer fancy, and nerves more exquisitely organized, might, if united to a partner congenial to himself, enjoy, in the marriage state, a degree of happiness superior to that which I possess; but I am convinced, that in the society of my beloved Mary Ann, I have all the felicity which a temper calm and unimpassioned is capable of enjoying."

As O'Neil narrated this little history of himself, the most agreeable emotions reigned in my bosom.—I sympathized in all his happiness; and, as he spoke, he won my confidence, and added ap-

probation and esteem to the partial feelings I had entertained for the companion of youth.—But scarcely had he ceased, when the striking contrast led me from the contemplation of his prosperous and contented progress through life, to reflections on those unsatisfied desires, and unavailing regrets in which my youth and rising manhood had been squandered.—"My friend," I cried, "your lot has been far more happily cast than mine; and while I leave my native land, perhaps never to return, I shall rejoice that those injurious and degrading exclusions, which have kept me from rising to my proper level, and exiled me from all I love, are not, in their general effects, so grievous, as judging from my own feelings, I imagined them to be.—Yes, my dear O'Neil, I sincerely rejoice that the violation of the capitulation of Limeric,

which has wounded my peace for ever, has not disturbed the domestic quiet which you have so wisely chosen."

The worthy fellow cordially shook my proffered hand, and by shewing that my lot was in some measure the common lot of my country, with a generous sympathy, endeavoured to soothe the perturbation which he saw labouring at my breast.—" The intolerant laws," he replied, " which succeeded, and violated the capitulation of Limeric, for many years interfered with the accumulation and distribution of Catholic property, and thus fell with an equal pressure on all the ranks of the Catholic community; but since his present Majesty has been graciously pleased to mitigate our sufferings, the weight of these oppressive statutes has fallen principally upon those, who, born to affluence, and gifted with genius, are

exempted from the cares of providing for a family, and calculated to conduct the affairs of the community. Yet the less favoured members of the Catholic body have still much to complain of.—In sketching to you the principal events of my life, I omitted to notice the many cares and disappointments, which, in this uncertain state, occasionally interfere with human happiness. One principal cause of those cares and disappointments has been our intolerant code.—I feel that I belong to an oppressed and humbled sect, that I am degraded among my fellow citizens, and marked out for suspicion and reproach.—The consciousness that all invidious distinctions, on account of religion, are fraught with injustice and folly, might perhaps enable me to look down on my oppressors with pity and contempt, were it not that such distinctions are injurious to those I

love. My wife is not so well received in society as if she had united herself to a protestant family; nor can I expect to see my children so well provided for as they might be if some of my rich relations had a share in the patronage of the state. But," continued my friend, looking at his watch, "we have talked the day away; you must dine with me, my dear O'Connor, and give me the pleasure of introducing you to my Mary Ann and her children." I gladly accepted his invitation: we left the hotel, and arm in arm proceeded to the house of my friend.

On our arrival at O'Neil's residence he withdrew that he might announce my arrival to Mary Ann, who was occupied with her children. Being thus left to my own observations and reflections, I contemplated, well pleased, the

comfort and elegance that surrounded me. The apartment where I waited was sufficiently spacious, and while perfectly free from the ostentation of superfluous ornament, was fitted up in the most appropriate and tasteful style: every thing was in its proper place, and without injuring the effect and harmony of the whole it seemed that nothing could be taken away, nothing added. Thus all I saw, as well as all I had heard from my friend, conspired to raise in my mind a sentiment of esteem for Mary Ann; and while anxiously waiting for her appearance I began to form conjectures concerning her, and to picture to myself her countenance and figure, until I conjured up an ideal being, and imagined it to represent my friend's amiable and accomplished consort. While fancy was thus employed Mrs. O'Neil entered. My first

impression on beholding her, was the reverse of favourable. The picture my fancy had drawn bore little resemblance to the original, and the feelings of approbation and esteem called forth by the Mary Ann of my imagination, did not, all at once, associate with the real person who bore that name: I felt revulsion and disappointment, and said mentally, "The conjugal affection of my friend has, like a flattering mirror, heightened all the charms of the object it represents."

The compliments of a first introduction were scarcely ended when dinner was announced. As Mrs. O'Neil presided at her neat and well ordered table, the prejudice which at first sight I entertained against her was gradually removed. As I heard her sensible and appropriate remarks, as I saw her eye

beaming animation, and her whole countenance expressive of intelligence, a thousand new and unexpected charms were revealed to me, and I began to wonder at my own stupidity in not having discovered them before. The evening was a most agreeable one—all pleased, and all pleasing.

My friend and myself remained over the bottle for some time after the lady of the house retired. As we entered the drawing room I discovered three lovely children ranged round the tea-table, and taking their last repast for the day. Health, innocence and gaiety beamed from their countenances. When their supper was ended they amused themselves without riot, and, without fear, asked for an explanation of what was said; and while they obeyed instantaneously, and without a murmur, the few

and reasonable commands of their parents, their accents and their looks bespoke the gaiety of conscious liberty. The father and mother gazed delighted on their lovely innocents, and then looked at each other with a smile of exultation which cannot be described. I spent a delightful evening, and retired to my hotel full of those complacent feelings which the contemplation of human happiness is calculated to inspire. My own disappointments and sorrows were forgotten; my slumber was undisturbed except by a dream of my friend's felicity.

At an early hour in the morning O'Neil called and invited me to breakfast. As we proceeded to his house he said, "after you left us last night I related to my dear Mary Ann the history of your life. She felt for

you that sentiment of esteem and admiration which I have so long entertained, and we agreed upon a little plan by which we hope to contribute to your comfort and amusement during your stay in Dublin. But you must suspend your curiosity a few minutes, as I cannot make our intentions known until Mary Ann has an opportunity of seconding my proposal." My heart thanked him for his good intentions, but discredited his power to impart consolation to one who was so soon to be a solitary and unconnected wanderer, without a country and without a home.

When we entered the breakfast parlour we found Mrs. O'Neil ready to receive us. She seemed more amiable and interesting than ever. The simple elegance of her morning attire, the

animation that beamed from her eye, and the smile of cordial welcome which played upon her lip, diffused a pleasing influence around, which rendered the mind forgetful of its cares and soothed the heart to peace. I seemed to breathe the unpolluted air of Paradise, and little in the habit of concealing what I felt, I complimented my fair hostess on the enviable attribute of imparting happiness. With a smile of unaffected simplicity, she replied that she rejoiced in being able to make me feel satisfied and at home. As soon as she had ceased, O'Neil, gratified and exulting at the high opinion I entertained of his wife, turned to me and exclaimed, "My dear friend, you have formed a just estimate of Mary Ann: she possesses, above all the women I ever knew, the power of communicating happiness. Myself, the children, the servants, all in fact who come

within our domestic sphere, feel her influence benign; while there is so little effort and display in what she does, that we are sometimes at a loss to trace our satisfaction to its proper cause. Having often experienced her skill in stealing the mind from the consciousness of its sufferings, in the hope of calming the irritations excited by injustice, and rendering your stay in Dublin agreeable, I proposed, and she immediately agreed, that we should invite you to reside with us. This is the arrangement which I alluded to as we came from the hotel, and it only wants your concurrence to be carried into immediate execution."

My heart swelled with gratitude and delight, while my worthy friend by this kind proposal, by his tones, and by his looks, demonstrated, that after years of absence, and the forming of new and

more tender connections, he still cherished for me, in their original warmth, those sentiments of confidence and esteem, which had marked our youthful intercourse. I pressed his hand, thanked him for his very kind invitation, but declined it. "My dear friend, though I admire the order and regularity which reign in your happy family, yet to this order and regularity I fear it would be impossible for me to conform. I must rise at my own hour, and have the distribution of my own time: in fact, I love, like Dr. Johnson, the independence of a tavern; and I am sure my kind friend will not urge me to relinquish it."

"We should be sorry," replied Mrs. O'Neil, "to urge any thing which could give you uneasiness, or trench on the independence you so ardently love;

but even on your own principles," continued she, smiling, " you ought to come and reside amongst us. You would be more completely your own master here, than it is possible for you to be at a tavern. There you must order your meals and wait while they are prepared: here, at a stated hour, every thing will be ready for you; and having nothing to consider about, nothing to wait for, the time in which you can be your own master will be considerably enlarged. The regulations of a well-ordered family resemble the laws of a well-governed state, and redeem the partial restraint which they impose, by securing to all who conform to them a greater share of liberty, than could otherwise be obtained."

" Yes, my dear madam," I returned, " but in the uneasy and unsettled life

which I have led, I have had no opportunities of acquiring the habits of regularity, which render compliance with family arrangements easy. The regulations of the society in which I live having injured instead of benefiting me, I have never learned to respect them: every thing that wears the appearance of restraint is irksome and hateful, and in the sublime rhapsody of the poet I perpetually look back with regret on the state of the world—

> "When tyrant custom had not fetter'd man,
> E'er the base laws of servitude began,
> And wild in woods the noble savage ran."

"Well, my friend," said O'Neil, "we will not longer press what is unpleasant. The objections which you have urged to our proposal are, in your particular case, sufficiently forcible, and they en-

able me to account for a difference between the manners of this country and of England, which when I resided in London frequently surprised me. While the Irish screen and make common cause with every violator of the laws, the English not only acquiesce in the apprehending of offenders, but are prompt to assist the civil power in bringing to justice whoever has committed an act known to be illegal. The reason seems to be this: the English respect, and habitually obey the laws, because they have experienced that the laws protect them in the enjoyment of their civil rights; the Irish, from an experience of a different description, feel and act in a different manner.

"Your observation is just," I replied with eagerness; "but confine it not to the British islands, extend it to

Europe, proclaim in every region tenanted by man, that where legal restraints are limited to what the public good requires, they will be obeyed by general consent; but that when partial and oppressive they must be enforced at the point of the bayonet. The good of the people is the only stable foundation on which a government can rest." The political turn which the conversation had taken roused all the dormant passions of my soul, and I took a hasty leave, that in solitude I might allow the perturbations of my spirit to subside.

Though I could not accept the invitation of my kind friends to become a member of their family, yet I spent a great part of my time in their society. Nothing could exceed their solicitude to win me from the recollection of my dis-

appointments, and reconcile me to myself and to the world. When any thing occurred to awaken my ambition, or suggest reflections on my blasted hopes, Mary Ann, with that delicate propriety of which she was mistress, would lead to some interesting conversation on literature and taste, or bring forward tranquillizing ideas of home-felt felicity; while O'Neil would take occasion to recal some pleasing incident of youth, and awaken the melancholy joys, which arise from reflecting on the scenes where we have been happy. I found that the amiable pair regarded me with a species of compassionate admiration, peculiarly gratifying to self-love. They considered me as a martyr to my principles, as a kind of superior being, fallen, by no fault of my own, from the sphere in which nature intended I should move, and by the most flattering attentions

and affectionate sympathy, they laboured to atone to me for the wrongs of fate. But it is impossible to speak their goodness, or to enumerate the thousand instances in which they made me experience the truth of the beautiful sentiment of the poet, that

> "The tear which is wip'd with a little address
> May be followed perhaps by a smile."

On Sunday morning I called on these affectionate friends with the attention of accompanying them to a place of worship. We all went out together—O'Neil leading his eldest son by the hand, while I escorted Mary Ann. As I conversed with her I neglected to observe the direction we were taking, and on accidentally raising my head discovered that O'Neil had turned up another street. "We are going wrong," I said;

"permit me to hand you across." "This is the way I go," she replied, turning into a church that stood near. "Heaven is an extensive region, and I am sure you will admit that it may be approached in different directions: follow Mr. O'Neil," continued she smiling, "and if you are not fearful of my monopolizing and oppressive spirit you will meet me at dinner." She courtseyed gracefully and entered the church, while I, silent from astonishment, turned round and joined O'Neil.

In the account which my friend gave me of himself and Mary Ann, he had never hinted that she was a member of the church of England; and from the perfect harmony in which they lived it never entered my conception that a difference of opinion existed between them on the important subject of religion. So

unexpected a discovery surprized me, and notwithstanding the mutual confidence and esteem which their accents and their looks bespoke, I felt a painful apprehension lest the diversity of sentiment existing between O'Neil and Mary Ann might some time or other interrupt the flow of sympathy, and wound their domestic peace. Though fully sensible that an adherence to different forms of worship was not in the nature of things incompatible with love, and all its delightful reciprocity of feeling, yet still I feared, that, under such circumstances, to maintain through life the cordiality and harmony which can alone render the conjugal union happy, would require a mutual forbearance and candour, in the most liberal and enlightened countries but rarely seen, and in Ireland not to be expected.

Full of these reflections I proceeded with my friend to the place of worship which he frequented. During the time of divine service I found it impossible to command my attention, or to restrain my melancholy musings, and when mass was ended, promising to return and dine with him, I parted from O'Neil; and, as was my custom, whenever my mind was oppressed, went on a solitary ramble. Here I had full experience of the falsehood of the maxim of Rochefaucault, that in the misfortunes of our friends we always find something which pleases us. I had delighted to contemplate the good fortune of O'Neil, while in this happy family I lost the recollection of my sorrows. A mariner escaped from the contending elements, I entered a haven of repose, and no longer bestowed a thought on the hardships I had suffered. To find therefore any thing which

must disturb this resting place of my troubled spirit, to annoy this blissful Eden of my fancy, filled me with chagrin, and put me out of humour with the world.

I returned to dinner at the appointed hour, but was still unable to shake off the depression occasioned by the discovery that a difference of sentiment existed between my friend and his wife. Mrs. O'Neil observed my gloom, and, imagining that it arose from some occurrence which had painfully recalled the recollection of my disappointments, endeavoured with her usual sweetness of disposition to draw off my mind to other subjects. We entered into conversation; the subject uppermost in my mind gradually insinuated itself into my discourse, till at last I became unable to conceal my feelings, and expressed my

regret that persons who in every other respect seemed so congenial should profess dissimilar religions. "I have not been happy, my dear friends, since I saw you separate this morning and go to different houses of worship."

"Do not, Mr. O'Connor," replied Mrs. O'Neil, with the sweetest smile that ever played on woman's lip, "render yourself unhappy by this generous refinement of sympathy: cease to create for us ideal evils, and in the anxious solicitude of friendship to partake in the sorrows which you imagine that we may feel."

"Ideal evils," I repeated eagerly, "sorrows which I imagine that you may feel! Then it was curiosity led you to church this morning; you are both of the same religion, and that interruption

of sympathy, that alienation of heart which so frequently arises from a diversity of sentiment can never have existence in this happy family: my mind is now at rest."

"You mistake again," said O'Neil, "Mary Ann and myself are of different religions; but surely it does not therefore follow that any interruption of sympathy or alienation of heart will ever exist between us."

"I hope not," I replied doubtingly; "there is one method by which so unhappy a result may be avoided." My friend desired me to name it, and I continued, "by perfect freedom of pursuit, perfect liberty of conscience. Amid the infinite variety which obtains in the universe there are no two existences exactly similar. In the diversi-

fied associations and feelings, which, as we pass through life, education fixes, or accident calls forth, it is impossible that any two minds should, on every occasion have a coincidence of sentiment. But it is on coincidence of sentiment that sympathy and approbation depend ; and whenever a diversity of opinion and feeling is called into play, there some portion of alienation and dissatisfaction will obtain. This demonstrates, that persons, in the marriage state, should, to a certain extent, be independent. For the only method to preserve, uninterrupted, that flow of sympathy and interchange of soul which constitute the charm of domestic intercourse, is a mutual forbearance that leaves the pursuits of each uninterrupted, and keeps out of sight, and throws to a distance, every thing on which a diversity of sentiment is likely to arise. To form a firm and indissoluble

union rational natures should touch at the points where they attract, and, where they repel, be suffered to recede. For there is no perfect affinity in minds; and when we would force them to coalesce completely, we produce a perpetual effervescence."

"I can bring," cried O'Neil, "an experimental proof of the truth of your theory. Actuated by mutual respect, Mary Ann and myself have ever refrained from interfering with each other's religious sentiments; each enjoys perfect liberty of conscience. Whenever our opinions happen not to coincide, each is anxious to leave the other free, and to keep at a distance every thing that might interrupt the cordial sympathy arising from the thousand other instances in which our ideas and sentiments agree. Hence the diversity in

our religious sentiments never interrupts our domestic harmony. In conformity to an agreement entered into before marriage, the boys are educated in the Catholic worship, the girls are brought up in the Protestant faith, and both instructed, as well by precept as example, to practise christian charity. Indeed in our happy family the spirit of bigotry is so completely subdued by the influence of perfect toleration, that, as you have experienced, a person may be very intimately acquainted with us, without even suspecting that there is a want of conformity in our religious sentiments."

While my friend spoke I was penetrated with emotions of the most lively pleasure. I had spoken of perfect liberty of pursuit, and perfect freedom of conscience, as the possible means of obviating the interruption of sympathy

and alienation of mind arising from a diversity of sentiment, without entertaining a hope that I should see my theory ever realized. To find therefore my principles brought to the test of experience, and producing all the benefits with which, in speculation, they seemed pregnant, awoke me to unexpected delight. But this was not all. I saw that those I loved were happy. I felt the conviction that their satisfied looks and endearing expressions, were not, as in many melancholy instances, the artifices of vanity to conceal from the world the anarchy and discord which throw the glooms of despair on the domestic scene. My spirits, which had been lately so depressed became buoyant, my heart exulted, and I said with animation, " my excellent friends you have acted with the highest wisdom. In your happy circle you have given

our narrow-minded and besotted bigots a practical example how religious animosities may be effectually subdued. O that their little minds could expand to take in a lesson so sublime, and that, under the genius of perfect toleration, my distracted country might at length be permitted to repose! But why, my friends, was I not sooner made acquainted with your sentiments? Why have I been so long withheld from the beautiful, the delightful spectacle of a family professing different forms of worship, yet under the benign influence of domestic toleration, living in perfect harmony, and bound together by the strongest ties of amity and love?"

"I had no intention, my dear O'Connor, of concealing from you that my wife was of a different persuasion from mine. When I related the history of our at-

tachment and marriage, this circumstance was accidentally omitted; and, since you came among us the topics of conversation never happened to lead that way. Indeed in this country religious conversations are studiously avoided. Our intolerant laws have raised the spirit of bigotry to such a heighth, one party is so anxious to maintain, by calumny and reproach, the monopoly of power which it has acquired, and the other so irritated and oppressed, that any allusion to the gospel of peace is likely to kindle broils and combats. Hence in polite circles the mention of religion is considered as a breach of decorum. Fearful of giving offence people refrain from interchanging their thoughts upon the most interesting subjects that can engage their attention, and, were it not for the prevalence of party spirit, a stranger might imagine that in Ireland

the politer classes had renounced christianity."

"This," I replied, "is a great evil; as religion is banished from conversation it is in danger of being banished from our thoughts. Indeed it is to be feared that this is very much the case. In Ireland a seriously religious character is more rare than in any part of the British dominions which I have visited, and even those who profess to be believers are characterized by animosity against opposing sects rather than by any christian principle. Ye opposers of African slavery, ye promoters of christian knowledge, imagine not that your enlightened contemporaries, or impartial posterity, will give you credit for consistency of conduct, or purity of intention, while you vote for the oppression of Ireland, and lend your countenance to a system

which associates the bitterness of party contest with religious discussions, and renders every allusion to 'the faith that is in us' indecorous and offensive."

After considering the melancholy consequences, which, in a religious point of view, arise from the intolerant laws still in force in Ireland, we passed to the political evils resulting from the same cause, and speculated on the inestimable benefits which catholic emancipation would bestow on Ireland, and on the British empire. These discussions interested me deeply, and the night was far spent before I parted with my friends and retired to my own apartments.

The religious liberty which reigned in the family of O'Neil, and obviated, in the most effectual manner, the dis-

cord and alienation that a difference of sentiment might have caused, was to me an object of delightful contemplation. With these excellent friends I passed the greatest part of my time; but neither their flattering attentions, nor the satisfaction I derived from contemplating their happiness, could reconcile me to those unequal laws which exposed me to perpetual degradation and to daily insult. I hastened to dispatch the business which detained me in Dublin that I might obey the injunctions of my grandfather, and, for the present, exile myself from my native land. O'Neil, though he was distressed at the prospect of losing my society, yet actuated by that genuine spirit of hospitality, which "welcomes the coming, speeds the parting guest," endeavoured to accelerate my departure, and assisted me with all his legal know-

ledge in adjusting my affairs. We ascertained the representatives of the persons whom my deceased relative had stripped of their possessions, and drew out and signed the legal instruments necessary to convey to them the property, of which they had been deprived by the iniquitous laws of discovery. Every thing was now settled to my satisfaction; my travelling trunks were packed, my bills were called in and paid, and I only waited for the return of the post, that, before I left the country, I might hear once more from my regretted parents, and receive their last commands. But who can escape his destiny? another unforeseen adventure occurred, and detained me in Ireland to endure my fate's decree.

CHAP. IV.

The day on which I dispatched the letter to my grandfather, saying that my business was adjusted, and that I only waited his answer to sail for Holyhead, the O'Neils proposed that I should accompany them to a ball and supper, which was to be given by a friend of theirs that night. I readily acquiesced, and at the appointed hour went with them to this gay assembly. The rooms were splendidly decorated, and contained all that was pre-eminent for beauty and fashion in the Irish metropolis. At-

tached to those amusements where, forgetful of the ills of life, all meet to please and to be pleased, I gazed upon the gay and moving groups, until in the buoyancy of my heart, I seemed to tread on air, and to glide through an enchanted scene. I fell into a pleasing reverie, nor recollected where I was until I found myself separated from my friends, and standing amidst a party of strangers, who, by their looks, seemed to enquire whence I came, and who I was. Feeling my situation to be an awkward one, I turned towards the door, in quest of the O'Neils.

I found the fair Mary Ann in conversation with a young man dressed in the ridiculous extreme of fashion. "Where," cried the coxcomb with an affected lounge of lassitude and fatigue, "where is our cousin Julia?" "Indeed,

Harry," replied Mrs. O'Neil in a tone of good-humoured raillery, " I am not Julia's keeper; but pray inform us to what circumstance she is indebted for the honour of your enquiries." " I engaged her for the first dance," returned the fop; " and though the company are taking their places, she has not yet arrived—waiting is a great bore—if she does not make her appearance in a few minutes," continued he, lounging and looking at his watch, " I'll take another partner—I will, 'pon honour."

" My good cousin, you'll do no such thing: with all this affected indifference you think Julia worth waiting for. I admit, indeed, that your heart may be untouched by her charms; but I shrewdly suspect that your vanity is covetous of the eclat of dancing with the most

accomplished and most beautiful girl in the room."

"I neither think her the most beautiful girl in the room, nor conceive that by dancing with her I can gain any additional eclat."

"I congratulate you, Harry, on your returning modesty," resumed Mrs. O'Neil with vivacity; "you can gain no additional eclat by being Julia's partner, because she attracts every eye, and leaves none to admire that well-turned person."

"Ridiculous," cried the mortified fop as he turned on his heel and walked abruptly away. Mrs. O'Neil, while he retired, said to me, "frivolous as my cousin Harvey appears, he does not want for sense, and if we could laugh

him out of his preposterous vanity, he would be an agreeable young man. But I am quite provoked that Julia, who is the child of nature, should have engaged herself to this effigy of affectation."

"You excite my curiosity concerning this Julia."

"She is a relation, and a very dear friend of mine. O I will put a trick on Harvey, and you shall be her partner." Mrs. O'Neil now enquired of a young gentleman who stood near, whether he could not pass a joke upon his friend Harvey, and prevail on him to take out another partner before the arrival of the lady he had previously engaged. "Nothing more easy," he replied, eager to have a laugh against his friend; "I'll hint to him, that if Miss Russel intended to be here to-night she would have

appeared early, lest she might lose so agreeable a partner, and then tell him I heard a beautiful young friend of mine enquire who he was, and saw her fix her eyes on him whenever she thought herself unobserved. His vanity will swallow it all—he will ask to be introduced to this supposed admirer, and take her out in the full assurance of having made a conquest. O how I shall rally him when he has thus doubly engaged himself, and like the ass of the school-men, knows not which way he should turn."

The young man predicted rightly of Harvey; confident that if his cousin Julia had any intention of appearing at all, she would have arrived at an early hour, in order to secure so agreeable a partner as himself, he asked to be introduced to the lady whose heart he imagined he had touched, and solicited the

honour of her hand. But while with all the complacency of gratified self-importance he led her to her place, his beautiful cousin entered, and in a voice, mild as the accents of a sainted babe, apologized for her delay. I know not how he looked, or what he answered—I had no eye, no ear except for Julia. She said, "but I see, Harvey, you have chosen another partner; I am glad that my late arrival has not interrupted your amusement, and wish you may enjoy an agreeable evening." Dignity and sweetness mingled in her voice, and she retired with a look and air which gave all who beheld her the assurance that it was impossible she should be either elated or depressed by the attention or neglect of such a man as Harvey. She joined Mrs. O'Neil, who said, "I have been the occasion of our cousin's breaking his engagement with you; but I hope I

shall be able to atone for this ill-natured trick, by engaging you to dance with an esteemed friend of mine:" then turning alternately to each of us she added, "Miss Russel—Mr O'Connor." Julia smiled assent—I touched her hand, I led her to her place.

We stood at the bottom of the set, and, while those above were dancing down, I had full leisure to contemplate the finest form and most lovely countenance I ever had beheld. From her full dark eye, celestial intelligence shone forth, and on the deep moist ruby of her lip there played a heavenly smile. A thousand graces loitered on her limbs as she bent gently forward with an air of pleasurable languor, which gave the impression, that, "tremblingly alive all o'er," she rested from the fatigue of her own emotions.—I had seen many beau-

ties—I had ever been exquisitely sensible to female charms—but I had never before beheld so much "of what the heart looks for in a woman"—never until this hour had my soul been fascinated, and spell-bound, and hurried away in all the delirium of romantic passion. Forgetful of the past, regardless of the future, I lived only for the present moment. Unconscious of the injustice I had suffered—no longer goaded by ambition—I gazed on Julia and imagined myself in heaven.

I took no note of time till Julia, by a graceful obeisance, reminded me that it was time we should dance down. She moved with the lightness of a sylph; like an ethereal essence, she glided without effort to the music; she floated on the notes, attracting every eye, and win-

ning every heart. I was under the influence of inspiration--every pulse, every vein, was conscious of her presence--I possessed "the Nemean lion's nerve"--I was endued with double life.—Now the dance was ended--now the music ceased.--I led my beauteous partner to a seat, and placed myself beside her. While my soul swallowed down the intoxicating cup of new born love, I gazed on the deepened roses of her cheek, on the heightened animation of her eye, and glanced at the neck of drifted snow, which, gently swelling, heaved beneath the half transparent vestment "in a heaven of beauty ending." I leant backward on my seat, then closed my eyes, unable to look again. Julia spoke. Eager to hear, and solicitous to please, my attention was drawn off from the contemplation of her charms, and I acquired power to

calm and to conceal the emotions that trembled at my heart. But still my mind was excited, and all the functions of my soul called into action. Memory poured forth her stores, imagination combined them into a thousand varied forms; while Julia, in a glow of sympathy, caught the animation which she had herself inspired, and mingled "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

I had never spent such an evening—never possessed such a capacity for enjoying and communicating happiness; but oh, how soon the moments of felicity pass away! Julia was no longer my partner—I saw her give her hand to another, and my heart grew sick.

After having danced with Julia, who could wish to dance with another? I joined my friend Mrs. O'Neil, who had

a little partner at home that withheld her from partaking in the livelier amusements of the evening, and we walked the ball-room, spectators of the animated scene. "Well, Mr. O'Connor," said Mary Ann; "what do you think of the taste and discernment of my cousin Harvey, who could be so easily persuaded to forego his engagement with Julia?" "As he is your relation, I forbear to speak the opinion I have formed of the man who is insensible to Julia's charms." "This declining to speak," returned Mrs. O'Neil, "speaks pretty plainly. But I must forgive that look of contempt bestowed on poor Harvey, as I am myself inclined to estimate a man's sensibility of heart, and soundness of head, by the admiration which he entertains for Julia." "You flatter me too much," I replied musing. "Stoop

from the clouds," continued she playfully, " and condescend to see and hear the objects of this lower world. It was not O'Connor whom I commended; I spoke of Julia." " But if you estimate my head and heart by the admiration which I feel for your lovely cousin, then will you esteem me infinitely beyond my merits." " Now I understand you. Your answer was not so incoherent as at first it seemed. You had no wanderings into other worlds, the queen of your idolatry treads this terraqueous globe—I must take credit to myself for some share of discernment," continued Mary Ann, dropping the sportive tone she had assumed; " I judged that you and Julia were calculated to excite a mutual interest, and, having determined to introduce you to each other this evening, when I found that Harvey had

pre-engaged her, I resorted to a little finesse, rather than be disappointed in a favourite design." She paused—then added archly, "do you think I was to blame?"

"Ah, my dear madam," replied I, "you appeal to a most partial judge. Your little artifice has procured me so much pleasure, that, though it could be proved a crime of blackest die, I could not pass sentence against you. I have no words to thank you. You have been the means of reconciling me to the world and to myself; you have bestowed on me a new existence; you have pointed out to me where I may find that happiness and peace in quest of which I was about to wander through the world—I believe I shall not for the present set out upon my travels."

"Not travel for the present," cried Mary Ann in a tone of pleasure and surprize; "you must then be in love—though I confess I do not understand this business of loving at first sight." "I cannot say that I understand only feel it—take me to-morrow to visit Julia."—Mrs. O'Neil promised to grant this request, and our conversation closed.

At supper I sat next to Julia, and even after I had retired to repose, I still felt conscious of her presence. In my mind's eye I viewed her heavenly form; in fancy's ear I heard her voice of melody. Still when a transient slumber overtook me, it seemed she drew near, and, with a sweet consenting smile, bent over me until her lip touched mine—as if the electric spark had struck me, I started from repose, grasped at the un-

real vision, and closed my eyes to dream of her again.

Late in the morning I arose, after having passed a restless, but most pleasing night. Breakfast waited, I refused my food; yet never was so ardently alive. Love served for repose and sustenance; love strung my nerves; love roused my mind, and gave a double action to all the springs of life. Unconscious of every object that was present to my senses, I sat in a delicious reverie, musing upon Julia. Imagination drew her picture. The bright creation smiled, and spoke, and breathed inspiration round. I felt the fervor of the poet, I poured forth the unpremeditated lay. Pleased with this first effusion of my muse, I wrote it down, determining, if it should be approved by the judicious

Mary Ann, to present it to her by whom it was inspired. Having finished the inditing of my stanzas, I was surprized, on looking at my watch, to find that the hour appointed by Mrs. O'Neil for calling upon Julia was already past. Detesting myself for this breach of punctuality, I hurried to the residence of my friends; Mary Ann was waiting. She gently chid me for my delay, and in order to account for it, I put into her hand the copy of verses, in the composition of which I had forgot the lapse of time. "I will look over your offence," said she smiling, "for the sake of these pretty lines: I suppose you wish they should be shown to the person who inspired them." "Yes, my dear friend; will you do me the favour of presenting them to Julia?" "I will, on the condition that you allow me to

select for that purpose the time which I may judge most proper." "To that condition I agree—all that is in this world most essential to my happiness, I would willingly trust to your discretion." While I spoke this, we passed into the street, and proceeded to the residence of Julia. As we approached, my heart throbbed anxiously; as Mary Ann enquired of the servant who admitted us, whether Miss Russel was at home, my respiration was suspended, and I trembled between hope and fear—she was at home—we were shown into the room hallowed by her presence.

This interview fixed, indelibly, the impression of the preceding evening. Julia seemed more captivating, more exquisitely beautiful than ever. The elegant simplicity of her morning dress,

which, fitting exactly to her shape, and enveloping her lovely neck, showed the perfect symmetry of her form, and, by "leaving the rest to fancy's dream," heightened the charms it concealed; the deepened crimson of her lip; the delicate hectic of her cheek, and melting lustre of her half-closed eye, indicating the languor, the soft delirium that succeeds the animation of our pleasures; the cordiality of her looks, and the pathos of her tones, as she pressed the hand of Mary Ann, and placed her by her side, all captivated my senses, and stole into my heart. Fearful of offending by too rude a gaze, I turned away my eyes, then in fond forgetfulness, fixed them again on Julia. A book lay open before her; Mrs. O'Neil took it up, and looking at the title, said "The Pleasures of Imagination!" Is

Akenside your favourite poet?" "At different times," returned the lovely Julia, "I have different poetic favourites. Akenside has a wildness of imagery, a flowing and varied harmony, which I find peculiarly congenial to that indefinable state between languor and delirium, which follows after being up late at an animating party. If the muses should ever visit me, it will be on a morning succeeding to a ball."

"In this," returned Mary Ann, while she cast a significant glance at me, "you are not singular: a friend of ours who was at the ball last night had a visit this morning from the daughters of memory." "Who," resumed Julia in a tone of curiosity, "has been visited by emotions so responsive to my own? O, Mary Ann, we on all occasions think and feel

alike; it must have been yourself." "Not so, I assure you; you know, Julia, I am not one of fancy's children." "You have frequently told me so; but though judgment, and a delicate sense of propriety, are the predominant features of your mind, I am convinced you have a lively relish for the pleasures of imagination." "Yes, my dear girl, I can relish, but I cannot execute. I have taste rather than genius; while I receive a very lively gratification from the splendid combinations presented by the poet, I am myself, unable to give to 'airy nothing a local habitation and a name.'"

"I am sorry for it," said Julia, while her mutable countenance assumed an expression of tender regret. "That," resumed her friend, "is not spoken with

the benevolence which characterises Julia. If I am susceptible of the pleasure which works of genius are calculated to impart, why should you regret that I am exempt from the prolonged sorrows, and self-created miseries, which associate with the higher powers of imagination, and too often render genius wretched." "O," cried Julia, while her countenance became illuminated by a divine enthusiasm, "there is a joy in grief, there are delicious tears which give imagination's lengthened sorrows and self-created miseries a charm that cannot be described.

"Ask the faithful youth
Why the cold urn of her whom long he loved
So often fills his arms?
O he will tell thee that the wealth of worlds
Could ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
That sacred hour, when stealing from the crowd

Of noise and folly, sweet remembrance
Soothes his grief, and turns his tears to rapture."

"But, even were it otherwise, the pleasures of imagination would far exceed her pains. She enlivens solitude, she peoples the desert, and from the uttermost corners of the earth brings us back to those we love. This morning I was musing upon this very subject, and thanking the beneficent Author of my being for that creative power of the soul, which carries us beyond the monotonous realities of life, and imparts enjoyment without measure. I congratulated myself on being able, in my twilight walks, to behold by a kind of mental vision, the absent companions of my heart; amid the silence of midnight to hear, in imagination, their endearing accents; and in the light vision of the

morning to be conscious of their presence."

"Plagiarism! Plagiarism!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Neil; "for shame, Julia; how can a girl of your fine genius descend to become so servile a copyist?"

"I was unconscious of being so," returned Julia, recovering from the enthusiasm which had hurried her beyond herself, and speaking in accents of engaging modesty: "I merely intended to give utterance to my feelings, and if I borrowed the language of another, I can only say that I know not to whom I am indebted."

"Then in this instance, Julia, my memory is more accurate than yours. Being 'no very great wit,' I re-

collect what I read, and can point out the passage from which you have borrowed the sentiment, and imitated the expression." "Indeed, Mary Ann, you must mistake: the sentiment is, at least, my own; for it was suggested by reflecting on those operations of fancy which I experienced in myself." "Come, come, Julia," resumed Mrs O'Neil sportively; "I cannot allow you to pass yourself off for an unassisted and heaven-taught genius, and will therefore take the liberty of reciting the poem from which your beautiful speech, on the power of imagination, happens to have been stolen." She took from her pocket the copy of verses which I had written, and read as follows:

Give to the sober-minded throng
Reality's insipid pleasure:
Mine be the bliss that's wild and strong,
Ideal bliss, that knows no measure.

Oh let me, at that tranquil hour,
When twilight, stealing o'er the scene,
Assists the soul's creative power,
View, in my mind's eye, beauty's queen;

When twilight fades, and midnight near,
Breathes mystic silence through the grove,
Let me, in fancy's listening ear,
Hear the soft voice of her I love.

And oh, ye powers, when morning blushing
Sheds visions from her shadowy throne,
Then let my soul, on rapture rushing,
Dream that Lucinda's all my own.

"What, Julia," said Mrs. O'Neil as she folded up the verses and returned them to her pocket, "can you now say in your own defence? are you not convicted of a downright plagiarism? Julia, who had listened to the verses with much attention and surprise, acknowledged that the language she had used resembled them so nearly, both in sen-

timent and expression, that there was a colour for the charge preferred against her, and requested permission to look over them herself: this was readily granted. As she read my composition slowly and half audibly, surprise was pictured in her countenance. I dwelt on her earnest and picturesque attitude, delighted at discovering this interesting coincidence of feeling; while Mary Ann, almost equally surprised and pleased, sat smiling at us both.

"It is indeed very strange," exclaimed Julia recovering from her reverie, and placing the copy of verses on a table that stood before her; "it is indeed very strange that the writer of that poem should, at the self-same period of time, feel in so many respects as I felt, and employ expressions so nearly allied to

those which I employed! Mary Ann, you know the author of these verses?" "I do, Julia; should you like to be introduced to him?" "Oh, yes, you know I am pleased with the animated conversation of a poet." "Then no time can be more proper for complying with your wishes than the present. Mr. O'Connor, permit me to present you to Miss Russel." Julia became embarrassed, and the carnation which had lately been so finely contrasted with the lilies of her cheek, suffused her lovely countenance; while fearful of increasing her confusion, I averted my eyes, and, for the first time in my life, felt out of humour with Mary Ann, for having thus disturbed the serenity of her whom I adored. But the playful and good-humored wit of Mrs. O'Neil was ever promptly excited to relieve the pain which it might happen

inadvertently to inflict. With happy adroitness she turned the conversation to topics of general literature, and supported it with so much vivacity that we speedily forgot our embarrassment. Our visit was prolonged till the day became far advanced, and, at length we parted mutually pleased with each other; but, I do wrong to say I parted with Julia. She was ever present to me. She had twined herself around my heart. I lived for her alone.

The morning after this interview I made another call at my friend O'Neil's, that I might talk of Julia, and devise the means of seeing her again. The door was open, and I entered without the ceremony of knocking. As I ascended to the drawing-room where my friend Mrs. O'Neil generally sat, I heard

the sound of music. The piano was touched to a wild and simple air, a voice "soft as the sweet south wind that breathes upon a bank of violets," was heard indistinctly through the half closed door. I stood for a moment in a pleasing dream, and then, as fearful of breaking the spell that had entranced me, stole into the room treading so softly "that the blind mole could not hear a foot fall." Julia leant over the piano,—she was alone. Her head was turned from the door, and I approached and stood beside her before she was conscious of my presence. She touched the instrument again. To that wild and simple air which even when indistinctly heard, had so lately thrown a spell over my senses, she sung my verses! I forgot where I was; I knew not what I did. She ceased; I seized her beauteous hand

and pressed it within mine. Julia, electrified, turned suddenly round, while fright, surprise, and indignation, blended their expression in her countenance. With an air of offended dignity she withdrew her hand from mine, and was preparing to retire. "Do not," I cried, "leave me in displeasure; pardon an intrusion which was involuntary. As I approached the room my ear drank the music of your voice, and I glided noiseless forward, fearful of interrupting the celestial melody. I entered at the unclosed door, and beheld you bending over the instrument, like a grace, a minstrel, just alighted from the skies, and unconscious of what I did, spell-bound, and in a waking dream, I approached unseen. I dared to touch your hand."

I spoke with that unpremeditated ardour which conquers conviction, and places our sincerity beyond suspicion. " I believe," returned Julia, while the smile of reconciliation fluttered with seraph sweetness on her lip; " I believe, Mr. O'Connor, you had no intention of stealing clandestinely upon me, or of treating me with disrespect. I perceive you are an enthusiast, and towards the errors of enthusiasm I am not entitled to act as a rigid censor. Indeed," continued the lovely girl in a tone of winning candour, " your unperceived approach was probably aided by my own attention being fixed, over ardently, on the little air I had been composing."

Just as Julia ceased Mrs. O'Neil entered. We recited what had passed, and she exclaimed with her habitual viva-

city, "you are the vainest creatures in the world, and carry on a traffic of mutual flattery. One is transported with the music and the voice, because they accompany his own words; the other ceases not to warble the words, for the simple reason that the air is hers."

"Oh, Mrs. O'Neil," I returned, "as far as concerns myself you have mistaken the effect for the cause: admiring the music and the voice for the sake of the poetry, it is from that music and that voice that my numbers borrowed all their charms. I can say with one of our finest bards, that while Miss Russel sung

"The longer I heard I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more;
And e'en to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before."

"A very fine compliment, and spoken with as much pathos as if you wished us to believe it was sincere. But as I hear a little friend calling to me from the nursery, I must, for the present, leave you to discuss together, the causes of your mutual satisfaction." Thus saying, Mrs. O'Neil withdrew. Her playful raillery was for once misplaced, and embarrassed instead of setting me at ease. The expression of our feelings should be left to burst without premeditation, from the glowing heart. Every allusion of a third person, every predetermined declaration, causes us to reflect on our own emotions, and checks that involuntary flowing of the soul which would lead to a natural and unreserved disclosure. I longed to speak of the coincidence of sentiment, the congeniality of heart, which existed be-

tween myself and Julia; and, if left to myself, what was uppermost in my thoughts, would, on the first occasion, have glided without effort into my discourse. But Mary Ann's allusion to the causes of our mutual satisfaction, gave a kind of preparation and solemnity to the subject; and I began to consider the most proper mode of expressing those feelings, which should have flowed unstudied from the heart.

To get rid of the embarrassment that chained my tongue, and sealed my lips, I took up a book which lay on an adjoining table. It happened to be a novel. I turned over the leaves inattentively, and enquired of Julia whether she had read it. She answered in the affirmative; and as we discussed the merits of the writer, and the nature of

the moral it was his intention to enforce, my restraint gradually wore away, and without dwelling upon what was most proper to be said, I poured out my thoughts and feelings as they rose. "These fictitious histories, when well written, are most pleasing compositions," said Julia; "and however the pretenders to superior wisdom may affect to despise them, they not unfrequently convey the most useful lessons." "The person," I returned, "who despises a well-written novel, instead of establishing a claim to superior wisdom, shows himself to be deficient in that ardour of feeling, and those finer sensibilities of soul which rouse the mind from the slumber of mediocrity, and excite and invigorate its powers. But novels are now so innumerable, and, in general, so wretchedly executed, that

one of superior merit, like a pearl on the sand, is in danger of being overlooked." "Novels are indeed very numerous, and many of them very insipid; but, upon the whole, I think it is a just matter of surprise, that writers of this class should be able to give so much variety and interest to their productions. In so beaten a field, to strike into a new path, or to pluck a hitherto undiscovered flower, entitles the fortunate adventurer to no inconsiderable portion of our praise."

"In every other walk of literature, this would indeed be true; but the passion of love possesses such infinite variety, and reigns so irresistibly over the senses and the heart, that, if the writer, who describes its workings, does not rivet the attention of the reader, and

excite corresponding emotions in his soul, he must be destitute of the slightest gleam of genius, and dead to all the finer feelings of our nature."—I raised my eyes to look on Julia, her face was half averted; but a smile, an approving smile, played upon her lip. Inspiration seemed to descend upon me, and I breathed forth my feelings undisguised and ardent.

"Love is the most general, the most delightful feeling of our nature, and the representation of it, even by a moderately skilful hand, must touch a consenting chord in every human bosom. As the stripling reads he is endued with a new pulse, and wakes to the day-spring of felicity; as palsied age pursues the tale of delightful misery, a thousand tender associations waft him back to

the enjoyments of his better days, and for a moment he basks in the sunshine of a second youth. The clown and the savage hear the song of love, and untutored nature touches their rugged hearts, and melts them to instinctive sympathy; the cultivated mind—the mind of taste and genius—ah, who can find utterance for its transported feelings, when, in the delusion of a heated fancy, it gives reality to fiction, and glows and trembles, as if in the presence of the object it adores? As the understanding enlarges, and the imagination becomes stored with images, the affections of the heart are rendered more expanded, more intense, until, in the enthusiasm of sympathy, we lose the recollection of our individual existence."

The colour rose in Julia's cheek, a liquid lustre trembled in her eye while she replied with gentle pathos—" Mr. O'Connor, you speak with eloquence; and, contrary to my preconceived opinions, you almost persuade me to believe that the principles you assume are just. Explain them more fully, for I have hitherto conceived that the finer sensibilities of the heart have been found to reside, not indeed with squalid poverty, or debasing ignorance, but amid those simple manners and unambitious views, which afford few opportunities for superior cultivation, and still fewer incitements to the exercise of the higher powers of the mind. Alas, how often a cold and depraved heart associates with an enlightened intellect!"

"I mean not to say that moral and intellectual improvement are, in every instance, necessarily connected with each other. But I think it can be clearly proved that a vigorous and cultivated understanding is favourable to all the tender and generous emotions of the heart. It is the principle of association which gives meaning to our words, and expression to our tones and gestures; that causes the thoughts, the joys and the sorrows of one mind to be infused into another. Vivid and expanded ideas, must, necessarily impart strength and variety to our associations, and give us a deeper sympathy with our fellows. Hence when two persons become attached to each other, if their perceptions are peculiarly delicate and vivid, the minutest inflexion of the voice, the slightest glance of the eye, or movement of the countenance, becomes asso-

ciated with some internal feeling, and transmits it to the other. Their hearts, set in unison, respond to each other in harmony divine. In devoted attachments, the idea of self is forgotten, and the chief happiness of each, results from contemplating the felicity of the other. There is an identity in their feelings, as if some attenuated and impalpable nerve communicated from breast to breast—as if the emotions of the soul, like sounds floating on the viewless atmosphere, were conveyed along some subtle immaterial medium. Then from breast to breast flows the reverberated, the multiplied delight; then each is endued with a double life, a double capacity to feel and to enjoy; they catch an emanation from the Deity, their expanding hearts overflow with universal kindness; they sympathize

with every thing that lives; the happiness of the universe finds a centre in their bosoms; the rays of felicity, converging to a point, glow with divine intenseness."

"Mr. O'Connor," Julia replied scarce audibly, "you would render one the slave of love. I never have conversed with a person who seemed so well to understand and feel the nature and extent of that sweet affection."

"Julia, if I know any thing of the affairs of the heart, you have taught me—yes, enchanting girl, you have been my first, you shall be my only love."—This expression of my sentiments burst from my overflowing heart. I recollected myself, and paused, and trembled at my own temerity. I durst

not lift my eyes to hers: but I saw her bosom heave, I heard her respire deeply. Involuntarily I drew near and felt her breath warm on my cheek. My head turned round in wild delirium—the earth and all that her inhabit, passed away like the baseless fabric of a vision — I was unconscious of the existence of every thing but Julia. I took her hand that hung half lifeless by her side, folded it within mine, and pressed it to my lips, and to my heart. She made no effort to withdraw it: while her humid eyes closed so slowly, she sunk back upon her chair, averting her beauteous countenance, and blushing rosy red.

Neither spoke. As fearful of dissolving the holy spell that bound us, silently conscious of each other's feelings we remained in a delightful trance, I cannot

tell how long. Julia, at length, rose suddenly from her seat, and, rubbing her forehead as if awaking from a troubled dream, faintly ejaculated, "I forget myself. Spirit of my sainted mother hover round, and give me strength to fulfil what I have sworn!"

I was alarmed, again taking her hand within mine I said, "Julia, you are not well." Withdrawing her hand, and recovering her self-possession, she replied in a decisive tone, "I now am well." She stood before me to all appearance transformed into another being. The air of gentle, of yielding languor which had hitherto been breathed around her, gave place to an expression of dignity and self-command that appeared something more than human. With a sentiment of astonishment and admiration I

looked up to her, as she stood exerting over herself a degree of voluntary controul which I had imagined to be unattainable; and, as it were, commanding her feelings to subside, and ordering the tumult in her pulse to cease.

Julia not only conquered the feelings, which, for a moment, had rendered her forgetful of herself, but produced in my breast a corresponding revolution. The ardent emotions that rendered me master of "the thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," gave place to a sentiment of awe and respect, that suspended my voice, and held my tongue in chains; and while the empress of my soul resumed her seat, and touched the instrument again, I stood by, esteeming and adoring, but unable to give utterance to my adoration and esteem. At

length Mrs. O'Neil returned, and conversing with her accustomed liveliness on indifferent subjects, relieved me from my embarrassment.

Mrs. O'Neil had not been long in the room when Julia rose to take her leave. "What can be the matter, my dear girl?" cried Mary Ann in a tone of surprise; "surely you came to spend the day with us." "I cannot remain with you to-day," was Julia's answer. Mrs. O'Neil pressed and entreated her to stay; but still, in a tone more firm, yet full of sweetness, she repeated the same reply. I also ventured to solicit that she would not, by declining the invitation of our friends, deprive me of the happiness of passing the day in her society. She remained inflexible, and I exclaimed, "Surely Miss Russel will not act un-

kindly, or refuse to one who would die to do her service, a gratification which can cost her nothing? For your sake I postpone a journey to the continent, and perhaps rashly and unwisely, linger still in Dublin; then will you not, for mine, accept an invitation from your friend?" She made no reply, and I added with emotion, "have I been so unhappy as to offend you?" "You have not offended me," answered she blushing and casting down her eyes; "but indeed I cannot stay." "I will not press you Julia," cried Mrs. O'Neil, while something seemed suddenly to recur to her mind. "My carriage, I perceive, has just returned from giving the children a country drive, and if it is agreeable to my sweet friend she shall return home this very instant." By a graceful bending of the person, and one

of those celestial smiles with which, in an instant, she stole away the heart and soul of the beholder, Julia signified her grateful acquiescence, and while my spirit died within me with disappointment and regret, I handed her to the carriage and saw her drive away.

With Julia all my animation fled. My spirit pursued her, the lamp of life burnt pale, and scarcely conscious of possessing voluntary exertion, I took the chair where she had sat, I touched the instrument to the airs she loved, and a thousand times repeated the songs her halcyon lip had breathed. Mary Ann rallied me; but, penetrated to the soul by love, lost and absorbed in the excess of tenderness, wit seemed sickening folly, and mirth appeared unholy. I rose to take my leave, resisting all the

entreaties that were urged to prevail on me to stay; I plunged into solitude, and indulged, undisturbed, my consecrated feelings.

Julia had this day appeared to me in a point of view, new, and more interesting than ever. The perfect self-command, and the decisiveness of character which our last interview disclosed, quite unlooked for in a person of her gentle manners and complying temper, took me by surprise, and heightened my admiration and esteem almost to adoration. I began to regard her as a being scarcely human; while in her sudden departure, and the tacit understanding which seemed to exist between her and Mrs. O'Neil, there was something that I could not account for, an air of mystery which excited my curiosity, and wound

my solicitude to the highest pitch. Again and again imagination retrod all that had been said, all that had been felt; and I did not desist from this renewing of the past, this backward voyage up the stream of time, until the records of memory faded before the anticipations of hope, and I began to muse upon the means of seeing Julia once again.

I knew that on the ensuing evening the mistress of my heart was to be at the theatre; to the theatre therefore I repaired. I threw round a glance of eager enquiry, and in the box immediately opposite discovered Julia. She sat in the front row, and beside her there was a vacant seat. Our eyes met—I retired hastily from my own box, in order to occupy the vacant place in hers; but before I could get round, it was occu-

pied by a gentleman of the party, who had before sat on one of the backward rows. During the evening, I could obtain no opportunity of conversing with Julia, or of communicating by the language of the eye, the ardent passion that reigned in my heart, and throbbed through all the pulses of my frame.—When the entertainment was over, another took her hand, another received her acknowledgments for assisting her to her carriage—to another, in a voice of gentle tenderness, she said "good night;" while I, who idolized her, I who prized her beyond this earth and all that it contains, unnoticed and in misery retired to my chamber.

I now for several successive days spent my mornings at the O'Neils, but it seemed that Julia had ceased to visit

them—I never saw her. At length the kind-hearted Mary Ann, observing my dejection, said, with a gay smile, "come, Mr. O'Connor, you must not put on the melancholy air of one 'crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love'—there is no immediate necessity for your dying in despair; if you have not seen Julia so often as you wished, it is not because you are disagreeable to her. We meet at a ball to-morrow evening, and if you will accompany us to it you may again behold this paragon of loveliness."

The conversation of Mrs. O'Neil, ever cheering and playful, had, on this occasion, an unusual magic, a power to chase away anxiety and put me in good humour with the world. Her hint that I was not disagreeable to Ju-

lia dispelled a thousand doubts which had bowed me to the earth, and induced me to believe the girl of my heart had not avoided me by design. I recalled the satisfaction which beamed from her expressive countenance when we first conversed together; I recollected the wonderful coincidence, which, on the ensuing morning, was discovered in our ideas and feelings; and I remembered the sympathetic emotion she betrayed, when love inspired my tongue, and the declaration of my sentiments burst from my kindling heart. Despondency gave place to presumption. I believed myself beloved. My soul, so lately sunk in the dismal caverns of despair, now breathed the refreshing breeze of day, and soared upon hope's golden pinions to the skies.

"At the appointed time, I called on

the O'Neils, and proceeded to the ball, buoyant with expectation, and treading upon air. I saw Julia, I heard the soft voice of her I loved—but she was already the partner of another—the next and the next set she was engaged. I asked her for the next ensuing, and while her eyes sought the ground, hesitatingly she promised to be mine. As she danced I stood out; as she moved down the set with heavenly grace, my eye incessantly pursued her. She observed my fixed and ardent gaze, and appeared disconcerted. I averted my eyes, fearful of offending; but the next moment forgot myself, and suffered them to dwell on her again. At length her engagements were at an end, and the moment arrived when she had promised to be my partner. As I drew near to lead her to her place, I heard Mrs.

O'Neil conversing with her, and rallying her on a degree of overstrained reserve, which appeared incongruous when united with a mind so susceptible and ardent. "For shame, my dear Julia," she cried; "this is carrying your precaution too far, this is doubting your own strength unnecessarily." "My dear friend," returned Julia, with that mild decision, which characterised her; "you must, in this instance, suffer me to act for myself. I am the best judge of what my strength can bear—more accurately acquainted with my own constitution, I must be allowed to decide how far it is necessary that I should guard against the maladies to which I feel conscious of being predisposed." "Well, Julia," returned Mary Ann, "I will urge you no further, but silently regret the sudden resolution you have taken. Ah,

here comes Mr. O'Connor, for his misfortune I must feel compassion."

"Oh my dear madam," I replied, stepping hastily up, "do not be concerned on my account; I am now to dance with Miss Russel, and whatever my misfortune may be, it shall not interrupt my felicity." Trembling and alternately turning pale and red, Miss Russel hesitatingly replied, "It grieves me, Mr. O'Connor, to be compelled to disappoint you—I feel myself so much indisposed, that I must immediately return home—on some future occasion, I trust I shall not be withheld from fulfilling my engagement." She turned suddenly from me, and putting her arm under O'Neil's, who had just joined us, added faintly, "have the goodness to assist me to my carriage." She hurried

away, while, oppressed by disappointment, surprize and sorrow, I remained, scarcely knowing what I did, by the side of O'Neil. But every other feeling was quickly swallowed up in solicitude for Julia. The assurance of Mary Ann that she was only afflicted with a little momentary weakness relieved my apprehensions without restoring me to peace. "If," I complained, "the indisposition of Julia is so slight, where was the necessity for her returning home so suddenly. Without dancing she might have remained with us a little longer, might have granted me the happiness of sitting by her side, of looking on her countenance, and hearing that soft voice which steals at once into the heart—but it is evident that her own bosom feels no portion of the passion with which she has penetrated

mine." These reflections pressed me to the earth during the evening. The first time I met Julia at a ball, I did not expect any very ardent or superior enjoyment, yet was happy beyond all my former happiness; on the present occasion, my expectations had been raised to the highest pitch, and I became a prey to disappointment, anxiety and doubt.—Our long expected pleasures burst, like a splendid bubble, at the touch—happiness comes unsought, and borrows half its ardor from surprize; it is a flower that blooms in the uncultivated desert, "nor asks luxuriance from the planter's hand."

The succeeding morning I waited in anxious solicitude, until the hour arrived when it would be proper for me to call, and enquire after Julia's health. As

I approached the door, seeing a gentleman come from it whom I had occasionally met at O'Neil's, I accosted him, enquired how Miss Russel did, and whether she was at home. He told me she was at home, that he had just been chatting with her, and that she was well and in good spirits. Trembling with joy and expectation, I knocked at the door—the servant who opened it told me his mistress was not at home, but I would not be so put off. I insisted that Miss Russel was at home, and giving him my card, desired him to let his mistress know that I enquired after her health—My card was taken up, and in a few moments the servant returned with Miss Russel's compliments that she felt herself considerably better, but that she was not sufficiently recovered to be able to see me that morning.

This seemed a death-blow to my hopes, and plunged me into the lowest abysses of despair. Julia received the visits of others—me she excluded. My heart sank within me and sickened at the thought—no ray of hope gleamed upon life's inhospitable desert. I looked around in mute despondency, and dared to murmur against him who called me into being.

In this gloomy state of mind I repaired to Mrs. O'Neil, that I might enjoy the last solace of the unhappy, and pour out my sorrows into the bosom of a sympathising friend. She heard me patiently, and with a smile that for a moment solaced my sick heart bid me be of good cheer, for that the difficulties of love were not so insuperable, nor its sorrows so lasting, as my imagination had represented them."

Not perfectly understanding the meaning which she intended to convey, I answered, "your observation may, in general, be just; the herd of lovers may remain tranquil under difficulties which interdict the accomplishment of their hopes, may speedily forget the miseries of unrequitted fondness. But with me it is otherwise. Oh, my friend, mine is a case of peculiar misery, to which no consolation, drawn from general principles, can apply. The transcendant loveliness of Julia, the grace, the softness that breathes around her, are calculated to make, on the most callous heart, an impression not quickly to be effaced. How can I express the effect they have produced on me?—her image is blended with my soul's eternal essence; I must cease to exist before I can cease to love her.—My sorrow must be as immortal as the principle of life."

Yes, my dear friend, mine is a hopeless case; misery without the chance of termination. From my childhood disappointment has been my associate; every expectation which I formed has been frustrated; every effort that I made to escape the annihilation of mediocrity, the laws of my country have rendered abortive. Without a place in society, without an object to pursue, I floated listless on the stream of time; and felt, in all its horrors, the wearisomeness of life. At length I looked on Julia, and awoke upon a new existence. Ambition slept, injustice was disarmed: as Julia spoke, my sorrows were forgot; as Julia smiled I thought myself in heaven. To make a figure in the world, to restore the honours of my ancestry, and transmit to posterity a glorious name, were no longer objects of solicitude.—I

cared not for the world, for I dwelt in the paradise of love.

"Ye momentary gleams of happiness that shot across the midnight of despair, only to render its glooms more dark! Sun of hope, that, dawning on me again, renewed, for a moment, the ardent feelings of life's delicious morning, then sunk amid the clouds of sorrow to re-appear no more! You have cheated me into double misery; you have rendered my fate, already dark and joyless, too heavy to be borne. O that my days had been permitted to pass away in an even uninterrupted flow of sorrow,—that I had never known this fever of the mind, these hot and cold fits of expectation and despondency! O that I had left my country without beholding Julia,—without knowing that there was

such a being in existence;—that I had never gazed on the fascination of her eye, never heard those accents, attuned to melting tenderness, which breathed into my credulous soul the belief that I was loved!"

"Mr. O'Connor, you are too easily depressed; your susceptible and ardent mind is the creator of its own distress. Surely there is not, in your present situation, any thing to justify this hopeless sorrow; nothing has occurred, in your intercourse with Julia, which should make you wish you had never seen her."

"Is she not the most lovely, the most fascinating being that ever trod upon this globe?"

"She is. She possesses every grace

which the fancy can conceive, or the heart desire."

"Did not the pleasure which I felt on our first interview, appear to be mutual? Was there not an astonishing congeniality in our thoughts and feelings; and, when the passion she inspired burst from my overflowing heart, did not her kindling eye, her agitated frame, give me reason to suppose I was beloved?"

"I acknowledge it."

"Has not her behaviour undergone a sudden and mysterious change? does she not studiously avoid me?"

"This is indeed true."

"And can you have the heart," I exclaimed wildly, "to tell me I have no

cause for hopeless sorrow? How is it possible for you calmly to assert, that in my intercourse with Julia nothing had occurred to make me wish I had never seen her? My cup of misery now is full. In the wide world there is no one that understands my feelings; no one that breathes a sigh responsive to mine, or drops over my sorrows a commiserating tear."—I bowed my head to the earth, and covered my face with my hands. Mary Ann approached me, and said, in accents of soothing kindness, "indeed, Mr. O'Connor, you mistake me. Though I believe your sorrows to be partly of your own creation, I feel for you the sympathy of a true friend. I said that you had no reason to despair; that you ought not to regret having seen Julia, because I was convinced that I could account for the ap-

parent inconsistency in the behaviour of this sweet girl; because I knew that she was not insensible to your merit."

Mary Ann ceased.—I started from my seat, exclaiming, "speak this again—Oh say that Julia loves me, and I will believe it, though it be inconsistent with reason, and contrary to sense. Sinking in the unfathomable ocean of despair, I will grasp the slightest straw of hope which your compassion may throw out to me."

"Moderate your emotion, my dear sir, and hear me. It is necessary that I should explain the circumstances in which Julia is placed, and, by sketching the history of her life, unfold the habitudes of her mind, before I can account for the apparent inconsistency in her

behaviour, and give you an insight into the motives which make her indifferent, when her heart is touched."—As she spoke, O'Neil entered, and was followed by a servant, announcing dinner. We sat down to a hasty and silent repast, and, as soon as the cloth was removed, Mary Ann resumed her discourse, and gave me the following account of the family of Julia.

END OF VOL. I.

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